An Account of the RISE and PROGRESS OF THE Religious Societies IN THE CITY of *London*, &c.

And of the Endeavours for *Reformation of Manners* Which have been made therein.

The Second Edition enlarged.

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Jas Keble maplestead
Cock may 10th 1807

The Dedication, to the Citizens and other Inhabitants of the City of *London*, and the Parts Adjacent.

SIRS,

I *Conceive it very proper for me, and of the greateſt Concernment to you, to lay particularly before your Eyes thoſe hopeful Means of* Reformation *which* GOD *hath lately pleaſed, in Infinite Mercy, to raiſe up amongſt you.*

I know I need not tell you, That you are Denizons of a City, *which for its commodious* Situation, Trade, Riches, *and* Plenty *of all neceſſary*

Accommodations, is inferior to few; and for its Evangelical Enjoyments, Liberty, *and* Laws, *is happy above all the* Cities *in the World.*

But I must in Conscience mind you, That all these great Enjoyments *are in manifest Danger of being lost by those horrid Enormities, which have for some Years past abounded in this great* City: *for indeed they are* gross, scandalous, *and* crying, *even to the Reproach of the Government of your* City, *and to the great Dishonour of the* Christian Religion. *And therefore, I beseech you, even by your Hope of Mercy in both Worlds, that you would effectually set your selves to pull up those* Pestiferous Roots, *which will produce nothing but Gall and Bitterness to You and Yours in this Life, and that to come.*

AND

AND I entreat you, with all poſſible Earneſtneſs, that you would not trifle nor deliberate long in a Caſe of ſuch abſolute Neceſſity, but ſet to it with as much Earneſtneſs and Aſſiduity as you would to quench the Flames *which you ſaw kindled upon your Houſes (of which you above others have had awakening Inſtances) or as you would remove Perſons infected with the* Plague *from among you; A diſmal Caſe too! which you have reaſon to remember. And I am ſure the leaſt Meaſure of* Chriſtian Faith *will aſſure you, that theſe are but ſome of the ſmalleſt Inſtances of the Vengeance of an* Angry God.

IT greatly concerns us of this Nation to look back, and take notice how many ways God hath tried us, both in the Methods of Mercy *and*

Judgment; *and how long God has suffer'd our perverse Manners, even till both the Providences of GOD, and the Sins of Men, seem to be advanced to a full* Crisis, *either for our Reformation or Destruction. And* London, *in particular, is many ways loudly warned* to reform, that it be not ruin'd.

HOW can you then, in Reason, in Policy, and in Self-love, (as well as in Conscience, and in the Faith and Fear of God) delay to take away the Causes of God's Wrath? How long shall those worse than Midianitish Women *be a Plague and Reproach to your City? How long shall they be tolerated to spread their Nets in the very Streets, yea, before the Sun; and to bring their Rottenness into the very Bones of so many Persons and Families? How long*

long ſhall the Diſorders of Publick Houſes *go unpuniſh'd, whereby many a young Man (that might have done good Service to his Country many ways) is utterly emaſculated, and becomes feeble as Old-Age, and trembles like a poor enervate Paralitick?*

IS it not abſolutely neceſſary to our Proſperity (*as well as* Salvation) *that the* Holy Name and Day *of the Lord be ſanctified, which have been ſo dreadfully polluted and profaned among us? And that every* Family *which would be thought deſirous of God's Bleſſing, ſhould daily ſeek it by ſolemn* Prayer? *And that they ſeriouſly ſet up Religious* Houſhold Government *within their Walls, as they would not be of the Number of thoſe who diſown all Relation to God, and Dependance on Him?*

WILL you be discourag'd from this, because some distracted People will call it Fanaticism, *and give it sundry ill Names, which the Enemy of all Goodness puts into their Mouths? Will you be mock'd out of* Religion, *and the Worship of God, and the Promises of his Favour and Kingdom, by such* Unreasonable Revilings? *Or rather will not every one that knows the Duty and Reward of a* Christian, *rejoice and glory in trampling down such puny Enemies of their* Salvation?

YEA, Let no Man's Heart fail him, tho he sees some Sons of Anak *appearing as Champions in the Cause of these Uncircumcis'd Enemies of God. You may, in the following Pages, behold* young Striplings *going forth with a generous Courage against these* blaspheming Goliahs, *who defy*

God

God and his People: And, praiſed be God, we have ſome Honourable Magiſtrates, *who go forth as Leaders in this Divine Cauſe; and we hope they will at laſt ſmite* overgrown Vice *in its impudent* Forehead, *and cut off the* Head *of it by the* Sword of Juſtice, *ſince they go forth againſt it* in the Name of the Lord.

AND, O! what a brave and bleſſed ſight is it, in theſe degenerate and debauch'd Times, to behold young Men (*not led by ill Women to the* correction of the Stocks) *but leading them to a juſt Correction! And to obſerve them taking greater Pleaſure in* Singing of Pſalms, *than others can poſſibly take in their* profane *and* obſcene Songs; *and in ſhort, better pleaſed in the puniſhment of Wickedneſs, than the poor abandon'd*

Wretch is in the commiſſion of it?

AND in this happy and bleſſed Work you have in your City *ſome of almoſt all* Ranks *and* Qualities *of Men, effectually, tho ſecretly engag'd, thro the late Mercy of God to us,* viz. *Members of the* Honourable Houſe of Commons, Juſtices of the Peace, *and* Gentlemen; *together with* Citizens *of all Ranks,* Officers *of divers Qualities, and* private Perſons *of all ſorts; So that you may have* Society *to join your ſelf to, ſutable to your reſpective Quality and Condition, be it what it will: And therefore every Inhabitant of this* great City *has at this day a moſt valuable Opportunity of doing great Service to* God *and his* Country, *of what Quality or Capacity ſoever he be.*

AND ſhall I now need to ask you

what you resolve to do in this matter? Or which side you will take in this Strife, betwixt the Kingdom of God, *and that of the* Devil? *Dare you be of the number of those who revile, discourage, and oppose such as apply themselves to the prosecution of scandalous Sins, which are our worst* Enemies, *and soreſt* Plagues? *Yea, can you be cool and unconcern'd in this important Affair?*

I must tell you, That there can be no Neuters *in this War betwixt the Prince of Light and that of Darkness. It is the known Rule of our Lord and Master,* That he that is not for him, is against him: *and,* That he that gathereth not with him, scattereth abroad. *So that your neglecting to oppose the growth of Sin, according to your Place, is a manifest cherishing*

cherishing of it in God's Account, and consequently an Enmity to Him. And if you are against GOD, he will be against you: and if so, nothing in the World can befriend you.

THERE is a natural tendency in Vice to ruin any Person, Family, City, *or* Nation, *that harbours it. It engenders Sloth, Variance, Profuseness, Pride, Falshood, Violence, and a Neglect and Betraying of the* Publick Good. *It dulls the Understanding, takes away the Sense of Honour, dispirits Manhood, cuts the Nerves of Diligence, and destroys the true Principles of Commerce and just Dealing. And by these means it directly tends to undermine and overthrow the Prosperity of any* City, *or* Publick Body.

BUT Ruin will pursue Vice the more

more ſwiftly and ſurely, becauſe it is puſh'd on by the juſt Vengeance of Almighty GOD, *the righteous Governour of the World; of whoſe* direful Judgments *upon other Cities abroad you have been ſufficiently inform'd of late, if you have forgotten the former Strokes of it upon your ſelves. You hear from* Smirna, Jamaica, Malta, Sicily, *and other Places, that many* great *and* famous Cities *have been ſhatter'd and ſwallow'd up by dreadful* Earthquakes; *whereas the ſame GOD (tho mightily provoked by us) was pleas'd only to ſhake and jog us in a very gentle manner by the ſame Expreſſion of his Diſpleaſure.*

O Sirs! take the gentle Warning, and improve the Merciful Reprieve, leſt His Vengeance ſwallow us up alſo, when He next ariſeth to ſhake terribly the Earth. *This is, in* Duty, *laid before you, by*

Your Affectionate Monitor,

J. W.

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CHAP.

CHAP. I.

An INTRODUCTION *to the following Account.*

SINCE the *pious Education* of our *Youth*, is a Matter of the greateſt Importance to us both in *Church* and *State*; and ſince the whole Hope of bettering the next Age, and of continuing the Mercies of God with this, depends upon it: It cannot be unacceptable to any ſober Perſon to peruſe a Brief Account of that which our *good God* hath done for us in this reſpect; to whom alone be the Praiſe and Glory of the whole.

IT is the Obſervation of many ſerious and judicious Perſons, that within the compaſs of a few Years paſt, there hath appeared much of the

the genuine Spirit of *Chriſtianity* in many young Perſons among us; whoſe pious Diſpoſitions, together with their humble and inoffenſive Behaviour, have occaſioned the Praiſes of God in the Mouths of many pious People: For, they cannot but look on this *bloomy Piety* of theſe Orthodox and ſober Perſons as a very ſeaſonable Bleſſing of God, to excite new Spirits in the degenerate Profeſſors of our Holy Religion, and to antidote thoſe *damnable Hereſies*, and check that *exorbitant Wickedneſs* which hath appeared with ſuch Impudence in theſe latter Days.

WHEN I firſt applied my Mind to draw up a *brief Account* of theſe Things, (being led thereto by ſundry moving Conſiderations) I adviſed with ſeveral *Divines* and others about it; by whom it was generally concluded to be a Work that might prove ſerviceable to the common Intereſt of *Religion*; and might revive the languiſhing State of it among us:

us: Which as it is the only End I propoſe hereby, ſo indeed it is a Conſideration that needs no other to ſecond it: For, I know nothing more deſirable in this World, than to invigorate a hearty Concern for Religion in it.

AND when this little Narrative was drawn up, and peruſed by ſeveral Perſons who were acquainted with the moſt hidden Springs and Motions of theſe *Societies*, they atteſted the Juſtice and Equality of it. In particular, the late Reverend Dr. *Horneck*, (who had a very perfect knowledg of them, and indeed was an eminent Friend, or rather Father, to them from their firſt Riſe to the Day of his Death) in a Diſcourſe I had with him a little before his Deceaſe, was pleaſed to give his publick Teſtimony to it, That it was *a very faithful and modeſt Account of the whole Matter*: adding, that at the firſt appearance of theſe *Societies*, they were lookt upon with Suſpicion and Diſlike by many

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of our *Superiors*, who now (ſaid he) upon a fuller view of them, do not only think them fit to be tolerated, but worthy to be encouraged; concluding with his Prayer, (in that Pathetick and Heavenly manner which was uſual to him) *That God would bleſs and proſper theſe Beginnings of Reformation.* This was the laſt Diſcourſe that I had with that *Pious and Worthy Divine*, who was (we hope) ſoon after tranſlated from his painful Labours to Eternal Reſt.

AND ſince the firſt Edition of this *Account*, I have underſtood in my Converſation with many Divines in and about this City, and by Letters from the remoteſt Parts of the Land, (from Perſons whoſe Faces I never ſaw, into whoſe Hands this *Account* has fall'n) that the Piety of many Perſons, eſpecially of the younger ſort, has been evidently enlivened thereby; and that it had been read by many of them *with a very ſurprizing Joy.*

AND

AND on this Occaſion it comes to be known, that in ſome places the very Scope and Deſign of theſe *Societies* had been begun and continued by ſeveral pious Perſons within theſe three or four Years paſt, who knew nothing of theſe *London-Societies*, nor had ſo much as heard any Report of them.

IN a certain *Town* (which I omit to name) ſome diſcreet and ſerious Perſons, conſidering the great Benefit of a ſtrict Obſervance of the *Lord's Day*, came to a Reſolution to meet together on the Evening before it, to enliven each others Affections towards Spiritual Things, as a meet Preparation for the Duties of the *Sacred Day* following. And finding the great Advantages of this Practice, they continued it for the ſpace of three Years; and then hearing what was done here in *London* ſo ſutably to their Inclinations, they were ſurprized with Joy, and betook themſelves to the ſame Method.

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IN ſome parts of the County of *Lincoln* a moſt profane Cuſtom had long prevailed, to ſpend the three *Lord's Days* after *Lammaſs* (and of late many before it) in Horſe-racing and other riotous Diverſions. This Diſorder was endeavoured to be ſuppreſt in *Cromwel*'s Days, but in vain; and afterwards by ſome *Gentlemen* of the County, but with no better Succeſs. So that it had now for ſeveral Years been lamented by ſerious People as an inveterate Evil which was not to be redreſt. But it pleaſed God this laſt Year to ſtir up the Spirits of the *Miniſters* of the adjacent Pariſhes with ſuch Zeal and Indignation againſt this ſcandalous Profaneneſs; that they took their *Conſtables*, and other proper *Aſſiſtants*, with them, and appeared with ſuch *Courage* and *Reſolution* againſt this rude Aſſembly, that the whole Multitude was over-aw'd and put to flight. So that on the next *Lord's Day*, where there uſed to be many hundreds of this lewd Mob,

Mob, you could only have beheld ſeveral devout *Miniſters* with their *Conſtables* walking their Rounds: Or if any vain Perſons look'd that way, their next Care was to flee with ſuch ſpeed as might ſecure themſelves from Apprehenſion. And it is hoped, that the ſame Care continued Yearly in this and other Places, will perpetually prevent the like Diſorders: to ſuppreſs which, they reſolve not to be wanting, as a *Miniſter* informs me from the Place.

THESE things, methinks, give us ſome Ground to hope, that our infinitely Gracious God is preparing the way of a more general *Reformation of Manners* among us than is yet viſible, partly by diſpiriting and intimidating the Actors of *Vice* and *Profaneneſs*, who have heretofore been undauntedly bold and hardy in the commiſſion of it; and partly by exciting the Spirits of ſuch as oppoſe our *Publick Sins*, even to a pitch of Bravery, which ſomewhat reſembles thoſe of whom

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it is ſaid in *Scripture*, That *the Spirit of the Lord came upon them:* and then we always find that they prevail, and came off with *Victory* and *Succeſs*.

SO that it is beyond queſtion, That if ſuch as are of Eminency in our *Church* and *State*, did more generally give their Publick Countenance to this *Divine and Glorious Work*, it would run on with Vigour from one end of the Land to the other. And how much this would tend to their *Comfort and Glory*, in that Day wherein *GREAT MEN* muſt give an Account of their Talents of *Power* and *Authority*, before that Righteous Judg from whom they have received them, is not to be expreſs'd by the Tongue of Men or Angels: Nor on the contrary, can we conceive the *Horror and Confuſion*, the *Regret* and *Anguiſh* which will then overwhelm ſuch as either drowzily forget, or cowardly hide, or baſely miſemploy theſe *weighty Talents*.

YEA, the Pious and Righteous Magiſtrate

giſtrate will not ſtay till the laſt Day for the Regard due unto him: He will be honoured and eſteem'd upon Earth, as long as the Notions of *Good* and *Evil* remain on Mens Conſciences, and theſe can ſcarce ever be blotted out. And the Temporal Advancement of ſuch is now the more viſible, ſince the *King* has given his Royal Word that he will enter the Liſts againſt *Profaneneſs* and *Immorality*, as the *Generaliſſimo* of thoſe who join in this Honourable Work. By which *his Majeſty* will appear *Glorious* in the ſight of Angels, and of Men, and be beloved of God himſelf, who will not fail to *honour thoſe that honour him.*

AND in truth, As the conſummation of our much deſired *Peace* with our *Foreign Enemies*, affords us a favourable Juncture for the Advancement of this Great Work, ſo is it a powerful Obligation upon us to ſet to it in good earneſt. For (as a *Divine* of ours ſeaſonably ſuggeſts) it is abſolutely requiſite to juſtify the ſincerity of

of our *Days of Humiliation*, and the *Devotions* thereof: in which, by confeſſing the *Publick Sins* of the Nation before God, and praying againſt them, we have ſo far engaged our ſelves to endeavour to ſuppreſs them, that we cannot recede from it without being branded with the moſt unſufferable prevarication with *Almighty God*. And it is not to be thought that a whole *Nation* can contract ſuch Guilt and come off unpuniſh'd: For it is not the uſual Method of God's procedure, to build up and eſtabliſh that People which dare thus impudently mock his Omniſcience, and challenge his Vengeance.

ONE thing more may alſo be remark'd from thoſe manifold Combinations of Perſons, piouſly inclined, in various Parts of this *Kingdom*, (as alſo in that of *Ireland*) namely, that it is not only requiſite, but even natural for Pious Perſons to *aſſociate* with thoſe of the ſame Diſpoſitions, eſpecially where conſiderable Bodies of Men of contrary

contrary Inclinations join together to oppoſe them. This was the firſt Cauſe which induced Men to unite into *Political Bodies*, and 'tis this which cements them together to this day; which demonſtrates the Neceſſity of *Religious Aſſociations*, in order to a general *Reformation* of Manners, and is a full Vindication of the *Societies* hereafter deſcribed.

BUT here I have heard ſome elder Perſons object, That it is not a proper nor a becoming thing, for Youth to manage ſuch Affairs as theſe; it were better (ſay they) and more ſeemly, that *Hoary Heads* ſhould undertake this *Great* and *Honourable Province*, and then it would carry greater *Honour* and *Reverence* in its Aſpect.

BUT, I pray you, *Grave Sirs!* who hinders your Aſſembling and Acting in this Poſt of *Honour?* What, but your own *Sloth* and *Lukewarmneſs*, and want of *Love* and *Zeal* for your God, hath ſo long ſtopt your Mouths from rebuking of *Publick Vice*, and

your Hands from oppoſing it? If you will vouchſafe to pluck your Hands out of your Boſoms, and fight like Valiant *Captains* in this Combate betwixt Light and Darkneſs; I dare vouch that our *Young Men* will gladly march under your *Banners*. But if you all ſtand idly and timorouſly, when the *Goliahs* of the Prince of Darkneſs come forth and *blaſpheme the Living God*, and defy his Servants; have you any Reaſon to be offended againſt theſe *young Striplings*, who ſtand up with a generous Courage to aſſert the Honour of *God*, and ſtop the Mouth of *Blaſphemy*? In this ye add the guilt of Envy to that of Sloth: and I admoniſh you to repent of both, and to act more becoming your Years and Vows, leſt theſe deſpiſed *Youngones take your Crown.*

AS to others, who ſuſpect theſe Aſſociations for the ſake of *Practical Religion*, as things of dangerous Conſequence, their Objections are particularly conſidered in the following *Account.*

Account. And in very deed, what Reaſon can there be to ſuſpect Danger from ſuch who manifeſtly and profeſſedly purſue the chief Ends both of the *Chriſtian Religion*, and of all *Civil Government?* And who do all this in Methods ſtrictly legal, and exactly conformable to the Conſtitution of our Government in *Church* and *State?*

YEA, ſince the Maintenance of the Authority of the Laws of God, and thoſe of our Land, is the great and only End propoſed hereby: I humbly ask all ſuch as reproach this Undertaking, and revile the Promoters of it, What it is they aim at in ſo doing? Can you ſay, that it is not fit that the God that made us ſhould be ſerved with a ſupream *Religious Fear?* Or, that we ought not to regard our Penal Laws againſt Vice and Profaneneſs *(thoſe wholeſome Ordinances of Man) for the Lord's ſake?* Would you perſwade us to give up our *Holy Religion* to be mock'd and trampled on, as it is by thoſe *Blaſphemers, Sabbath-breakers,*

and other *lewd Perſons*, who are checkt, and in part ſuppreſs'd by theſe *Societies*? Have you the Forehead to tell our *Miniſters*, that they may read the *Law of God* againſt profane Swearing every *Lord's Day*, and the *Law of the Land* againſt it four Times in the Year, (yea both theſe in the peculiar Preſence of God, and in the ſolemn Aſſembly of his People) and yet do nothing in it, nor take any farther Care about it, but make the reading of both theſe Laws a *meer Mockery* in the Face of God and Men? Or can you ſtand forth and tell the *Magiſtrate*, That he is not to be a *Terror to Evil-doers*, nor *a Countenancer of thoſe that do Well*?

TRULY, Sirs! your Attempts of this Nature will be in vain, till you can perſwade us withal, That there is no *God*, no *Providence*, nor *Judgment* to come. And truly it becomes all that are under the Sacred Vows of the *Chriſtian Religion* to conſider this in a due manner, but eſpecially thoſe who

who have the ſuperadded Bonds of other *Oaths* and *Engagements* binding them to a ſpecial Concern for God's Service and Honour, as all the *Magiſtrates* and *Miniſters* of this Land have in a very tremendous manner.

AND bleſſed be God, There are ſome of both theſe who heartily and vigorouſly engage in this *glorious Enterprize*, and who meet together at ſet Times to further it according to their Power and proper Place of acting in it. And if any can be content to ſit idly in this Time of their *Maſter's Harveſt*, or are pleaſed to deride ſuch as ſet themſelves to it, we leave them to their *Judg*.

IN ſhort, Tho the Aſſiſtance given to this *Great and Bleſſed Work*, be not ſo great nor general, as to advance it at preſent with that Power and univerſal Prevalency as is highly deſirable: Yet thro' the Goodneſs of God to us, there are ſo many Perſons of various *Qualities*, *Functions*, and *Authority*, who heartily apply themſelves

to it, as are not only ſufficient (under God) to make it ſubſiſt, but to prevail in a great meaſure, even to a conſpicuous abatement of all manner of notorious *Vice* and *Profaneneſs*. As it more particularly appears in the following *Account*.

CHAP. II.

An Account of the Riſe of theſe Societies.

I Do not here undertake to give an Account of all the *Pious Fellowſhip* of Youth, which hath been amongſt us in time paſt, (which, we may hope, has been the practice of ſerious *Young Men* in all Ages, and among all the too various Denominations of *Chriſtians*) but to give a ſhort Narrative of the Original of thoſe *Regulated Societies*, which are now (thro' the Grace of God) conſpicuous

ſpicuous among us for many good Works; and which (if duly encourag'd) may very much contribute towards the Support, Honour and Advancement of theſe *Three Kingdoms*, in Church and State; and yet are but too little known to very many among us.

NOW, as far as I am able to trace their *firſt Riſe*, it was thus introduc'd by the Gracious Providence of God.

IT is now about twenty Years ago, that ſeveral young Men of the *Church of England*, in the Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*, were about the ſame time touch'd with a very affecting ſenſe of their Sins, and began to apply themſelves, in a very ſerious manner, to *Religious Thoughts and Purpoſes*.

AS to their manner of Life before this, I am inform'd, That tho ſome of them had been guilty of great Lewdneſs, and yet became very affectionate Servants of God afterwards, (even to

an eminency, in the Judgment of ſome, who with Wonder conſider'd their *happy Change)* yet the greater part of them were ſuch as had enjoy'd a ſober Education, and had not ſhared in the ſcandalous and heighten'd Enormities of theſe *later Days*, otherwiſe than by their having been too inſenſible of the Diſhonour done to God by them. But they now began to look on their own and others Sins, in another manner.

I was, about that time, made privy to the Spiritual Sorrows of one of them; who with floods of Tears lamented, that he had not till then had any affecting Apprehenſions of the *Glorious Majeſty* and *Perfections* of *God*, nor of his Infinite Love to Men in his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*: And that he had not before felt any juſt Convictions of the *Immenſe Evil* of every Offence againſt God, tho it be but (ſaid he) in the wilful Neglect or Miſperformance of any Duty to him. But now he ſaw and groan'd under all this,

this, in very ſharp and pungent Convictions. And withal perceiving the univerſal Corruption of *Humane Nature*, and the deplorable Crookedneſs and *Deceit* of *Man's Heart*; and with what a world of Temptations we are encompaſs'd, being withal beſieg'd by many inviſible Legions of *Infernal Spirits:* When he conſider'd all this, his Soul was even poured out within him, and he was in danger of being overwhelmed with *exceſſive Sorrow.*

THE Caſe was very much the ſame with ſeveral *young Men* at the ſame time, (as he then told me) ſome of whom had been greatly tempted by the Devil (that *Murderer from the beginning*) to lay violent hands on themſelves; which was alſo (he confeſs'd) his own Temptation; and that ſo urgent and inceſſant, that Sleep departed from his Eyes, as well as Reſt from his Soul.

IN this mournful Seaſon, theſe diſconſolate convicted Perſons often reſorted

ſorted to their *Miniſters* for Spiritual Advice and Succour; betaking themſelves in good earneſt to the ways of real *Piety*, and eternal *Peace*. And it many times fell out, (as the ſame Perſon inform'd me) that ſeveral of them met together at the Houſe of their *Spiritual Phyſician*, ſeeking Cure for their *wounded Spirits*; and ſo contracted a little Acquaintance by thoſe Providential Interviews.

FOR, alas! *(as he ſuggeſted)* there needed little other Language but that of their Looks to diſcover their inward Sorrows to each other, (eſpecially when they came prepar'd to open them to their *Miniſter*) and they needed no other Arguments to incline them to pity each other's Caſe, but to conſider their own; there being a Propenſity in *Nature* to ſuccour thoſe who groan under the like Miſeries with our ſelves. So that by theſe and the like Means they ſoon contracted a very intimate Acquaintance.

THE Benefit of Dr. *Horneck*'s A-

wakening Sermons, and the Morning Lectures on the Lord's Day in *Cornhil*, preach'd by Mr. *Smithies*, (chiefly deſign'd for the Inſtruction of Youth) having occaſion'd much of this happy Work upon the Spirits of theſe *Young Men*; they did more particularly apply themſelves to theſe Divines for Direction, who had been Inſtruments in the Hand of God for their Conviction.

AND upon their frequent Application to theſe and other *Miniſters*, it was adviſed, That ſince their Troubles aroſe from the ſame Spiritual Cauſe, and that their Inclinations and Reſolutions center'd in the ſame Purpoſe of a Holy Life; they ſhould meet together once a Week, and apply themſelves to good Diſcourſe, and *things wherein they might edify one another*. And for the better Regulation of their Meetings, ſeveral *Rules* and *Orders* were preſcrib'd them, being ſuch as ſeem'd moſt proper to effect the End propos'd.

UPON

UPON this they met together, and kept to their *Rules*; and at every Meeting (as it was adviſ'd) they conſider'd the Wants of the Poor, which in time amounted to ſuch conſiderable Sums, that thereby many *poor Families* have been reliev'd, ſome *poor People* ſet into a way of Trade ſutable to their Capacities, ſundry *Priſoners* ſet at Liberty, ſome poor *Scholars* furthered in their Subſiſtence at the *Univerſity*, ſeveral *Orphans* maintain'd, with many other good Works.

BUT they were not preſently brought to thoſe *pious Exerciſes*, *Orders*, and Things of *publick Benefit*; to which they are now, by the Grace of God, advanced. As no Creature is born in its full Perfection; ſo the improvement of theſe *Societies* grew up by degrees, by conferring one with another, and by their enlarg'd Deſires of doing Good, as Occaſions and Advice were offer'd them. So that I cannot but recommend *Chriſtian Society* with the greateſt earneſtneſs, to

all ſorts of Men. It muſt needs be as uſeful to *Magiſtrates* and *Miniſters*, in carrying on their arduous Work of regulating and reforming Mens Manners, as daily Experience ſhews it to be to *Artiſts* and *Tradeſmen*, who join together in *Companies* and *Societies*, and find their Arts and Intereſts advanc'd by a multitude of Heads and Hands. So that we may very properly pronounce *Solomon*'s *Wo to him that is alone.*

THESE *Young Men* ſoon found the Benefit of their *Conferentes* one with another, by which (as ſome of them have told me with Joy) they better diſcover'd their own Corruptions, the Devil's Temptations, and how to countermine his *ſubtle Devices*; as to which each Perſon communicated his *Experiences* to the reſt.

IT ſeemed proper, for the better management of their *Common Stock* for Charitable Uſes, to chuſe two *Stewards*, as the *Managers* of their Charity. And the two firſt Stewards

ards that I find (after diligent search) were in the Year 1678, whose Names I have by me, with a recorded Succession of them to the beginning of the Reign of K. *James* II. At which time the face of the *Reformed Religion* being clouded, and all private Meetings suspected, some of these young Persons, not having digg'd deep enough to have a firm Root in Religion, began to shrink and give back, (like the Seed in our *Saviour*'s Parable, *which had no deepness of Earth*) being afraid of the Jealousy of the *State* against them, especially when they saw the *bloody* and *merciless Executions* in City and Country, with which that Reign began, which dy'd it of such a crimson Colour, as render'd it frightful to many, particularly to these young *Proselytes*, insomuch that some of them forsook their wonted Assemblies, and gettir g loose from their strict *Rules* and good *Society*, they grew cool in Religious Concerns, and alas, some of them grew

grew looſe and extravagant.

TIMES of Danger are indeed Times of Trial, and many times of Falling; as it prov'd to the firſt Followers of our *Bleſſed Saviour*, who kept cloſe to their Maſter whilſt he was at liberty; but when they ſaw him apprehended, and in the hands of powerful Enemies, *they all forſook him, and fled.*

BUT thrô the Grace of God, there was not ſuch a total Tergiverſation among theſe young Diſciples of our Lord; but on the contrary, ſome of them being encourag'd by others, who till then had not been of this *Society*, being alſo griev'd at Heart to ſee ſome of their Brethren *turn their Backs in the Day of Battel*; and being animated with Holy Zeal againſt the growing Intereſts of *Popery*, (which then appear'd not only open, but in Armour, being promoted by the utmoſt Power and moſt earneſt Zeal of the *Prince* then reigning): Being (I ſay) greatly moved on all theſe Accounts,

counts, they took up a more vigorous Resolution than ever, to do what in them lay towards the maintaining and encreasing the Purity and Power of *Religion* in themselves and others. And seeing that the *Popish Mass* was then publickly celebrated, not only at the *Royal Chappel*, but in other Publick Places, they set up (at their own Expence) publick Prayers every Evening at Eight of the Clock, at St. *Clement Danes*, which never wanted a full and affectionate Congregation. And not long after they set up an Evening *Monthly Lecture* in the same Church, to confirm Communicants in the Holy Purposes and Vows which they made at the *Lord's Table*: And by this publick Lecture (which was greatly frequented) many were confirmed both in the *Profession* & *Practice* of the true Principles of *Primitive Religion*; for they were preached by the most eminent *Divines* about the *City*, from whose Lips and Pens *Popery* receiv'd such Wounds, as all her Art will

will never be able to cure.

IT was the Design of these *Young Men*, from the first framing of their *Societies*, to conceal their Names from publick Knowledg, lest it should seem to be a Device to catch the *Applauses of Men*; which is but a very poor Matter, an Aerial Blast, of little importance if you obtain it, and of which you can have no hold: and they look'd upon it with a just Disdain, in comparison with those *exceeding great and precious Promises* which the Unchangeable God hath set before Men. But they had now a particular Reason for concealing their Names from all but their Ministers and a few Friends; for the Eyes of *Papists then in Power* were intent upon them, who (together with those their Undersetters, whom Gain and the Promises of *Court-favour* had brought over to their Party) pry'd narrowly into all they did; so that they saw they had great Reason, as well as the *Primitive Christians*, to use the *Wisdom of the Serpent*, whilst they

as

as carefully retain'd the *Innocence of the Dove*; especially being in the near Neighbourhood of the *Court*, which was then fill'd with Foreign and Domestick Zealots for *Popery*, or with crouching false-Friends to *Protestancy*.

IN this juncture, upon Advice, they chang'd the Name of *Society* for that of *Club*; and instead of meeting at a Friend's House, who might be endanger'd by it, they adjourn'd to some Publick House or other where they could have a Room to themselves; and under the Pretext of spending a Shilling or two, they confer'd seriously together in the same Religious manner as formerly; by which honest Artifice they carried on their good Design without interruption, even to the end of that *unhappy Reign*.

AND since I have had occasion (a few Pages before) to take notice of the Disputes betwixt our *Divines*, and those of *Rome*, concerning the *Lord's Supper*, I beg leave of my Reader, (tho it be a little foreign to the present

Discourse)

Diſcourſe) to lay before him a moſt memorable Teſtimony of God on the behalf of his Truth, relating to this matter, as I find it related by that faithful Miniſter of Chriſt, Monſieur *Pineton*, who was a great and long Sufferer under the *Papal Tyranny* in the Principality of *Orange*.

THIS learned *Gentleman*, having related the deplorable Ravages made on the Subjects of his *Royal Highneſs* the *Prince* of *Orange*, by the Arms of *France*, which at laſt advanced to the total Suppreſſion of the Exerciſe of the *Reformed Religion* in that *Principality*: He goes on (in his Book entituled, *Les Larmes de Jacques Pineton de Chambrun, pag.* 9, 10.) in theſe words: "*Je ferois tort au Public*, &c.

In Engliſh thus,

" AND here I ſhould do wrong to " the *Publick*, if I ſhould omit one " Paſſage which deſerves to be tranſ- " mitted to Poſterity. One of the " forementioned Gentlemen (the *Je-* " *ſuits*) preaching on the Octave of " their

" their Holy Sacrament, in the Year
" 1678, challenged me in his Pulpit,
" to make Answer to the Arguments
" which he then produced to prove
" the *Real Presence* of Christ's Body,
" and to justify the Adoration of the
" *Sacrament*.

" THERE was one who gave me
" an exact Relation of all that he had
" advanced: But I made light of it for
" some time, and had no thoughts
" of making him any Reply, con-
" tenting my self to give Satisfaction
" to such as made any Report of his
" Sermon. But at last, seeing that
" he provoked me from day to day,
" and that my People desired with
" Passion that I should return him an
" Answer: I undertook one *Lord's*
" *Day* in the Evening Exercise, to re-
" fute all the Sermons which he had
" made on that Subject. I preached
" above four Hours, not only in the
" presence of my usual Congregati-
" on, but of many Strangers who
" came to take cognizance of this

" Refu-

" Refutation. I may ſay, that I put
" him into a furious Diſorder, by un-
" folding his falſe Reaſonings and
" falſe Quotations. I overwhelm'd
" him with Paſſages of the *Fathers*,
" about whom he had made ſuch
" Oſtentation. So that going from
" my Sermon, he fell to tearing of
" his Hair, and ſaid to a Gentleman
" of the *Roman Communion* now
" living, whoſe Name is *Villeneuf*;
" *Alas! I know not where I am. Good*
" *God! how ſhall I be able to anſwer*
" *ſo many Quotations?* Indeed he took
" ſufficient care not to attempt to fol-
" low me; but contented himſelf to
" make divers Exclamations in his
" Pulpit about my affirming, that the
" Adoration of the Sacrament was an
" *Idolatrous Worſhip*. And he be-
" lieved that he might ſomewhat ex-
" tricate himſelf from this Affair by
" this pathetick Apoſtrophe, which
" I give you in his own words.

" *GREAT God! why ſuffer you your*
" *Worſhip, the moſt Auguſt and moſt*
" *Holy,*

" *Holy, to be treated as Idolatrous? If*
" *it be true (as these Ministers accuse*
" *us) that we are Idolaters, and that*
" *the Priests are Impostors, when they*
" *say that they daily sacrifice the Body of*
" *your Well-beloved Son; where are*
" *your Thunders? where are your Thun-*
" *derbolts, to crush these Impostors and*
" *Idolaters?*

" AND in the sequel, turning him-
" self towards the *Altar* where the
" Host was exposed, he continued his
" Apostrophe in these words.

" *YEA my Saviour! I address my-*
" *self unto you, to demand of you that*
" *you judg our Cause by some Miracle:*
" *If we are Idolaters in adoring your*
" *Holy Sacrament, make the Fire of*
" *Heaven to fall upon us, as* Elijah *did*
" *upon the Priests of* Baal. *THUN-*
" *DER-STRIKE OUR ALTARS,*
" *and then you will undeceive us, and*
" *perswade us indeed by such a Judg-*
" *ment, that we are Idolaters.*

" IT was precisely on the nine-
" teenth of *June* 1678, that he pro-
" nounced

" nounced this Imprecation. And
" juſt ten days after, namely, on the
" twenty ninth of the ſame Month,
" being the Feaſt of St. *Peter* and St.
" *Paul*, being then upon Wedneſday
" about 9 in the Morning, God ma-
" nifeſted the Miracle which this *Je-*
" *ſuit* had demanded. The Heavens
" grew Dark by reaſon of thick
" Clouds, Flaſhes of Lightning ſhone
" in all Parts, Thunders roared with
" a very extraordinary Noiſe; and
" there was one ſtrange Thunder-
" clap, whoſe ſhock fell juſt by that
" great *Altar*, towards which the
" *Jeſuit* had directed his Apoſtrophe,
" and where the Canon *Caulet* then
" celebrated Maſs. The Clap of
" Thunder threw him down upon
" his Back, it tore up ſeveral Stones
" of the Vault; and paſſing into the
" firſt Chappel which is on the Left
" hand of the Quire, burnt the Cloth
" of the Altar to powder, where one
" celebrated the Maſs alſo at the
" ſame time. The Lady *de la Piſa*,

" who

" who was on her Knees, was much
" hurt with it, and all covered with
" Dust, with many other Persons.
" They carried the said *Lady* half-
" dead to her House, where she was
" speedily blooded; and the Thun-
" der-bolt which was the Cause of
" all this Disorder, going forth tho-
" row a Window of the Church,
" fastened to the Tower, where they
" laboured till the Evening to extin-
" guish the Fire which it had kind-
" led.

" BEHOLD here a very positive
" Matter of Fact, known throughout
" the *Principality of Orange*, and all
" the neighbouring Places there-
" about: Which ought to bring all
" sober *Roman-Catholicks* to a serious
" consideration of the Matter. Thus
far that Worthy Gentleman.

WE here behold a marvelous Attestation of *Almighty God* to his Truth, much like that which decided the Controversy betwixt the *Prophet of God* and the *Priests of Baal* upon

upon Mount *Carmel:* And methinks as all the By-ſtanders cried out then, *The Lord he is the God*; ſo all that hear this marvelous Event, ſhould not refrain their Suffrage for the *Proteſtant Sacrament* in oppoſition to the *Romiſh Maſs*. Truly, the *Papiſts* have diſcarded their Senſes and Reaſon to all Intents and Purpoſes, if they take no notice of this: However, I am ſure *Proteſtants* will, and therefore I queſtion not their Pardon for this Digreſſion.

AND thus we return to our *Pious Societies* where we left them, namely, at the latter end of the Reign of King *James*, and ſhall conſider them at the beginning of the Reign of King *William* and Queen *Mary* in the next Chapter.

CHAP. III.

An Account of the Progreſs of theſe Societies; And of their real Aim and Deſign.

THIS their *Conſtancy*, *Piety*, and good Service to the *Publick*, in ſo hazardous a Juncture, made them more known, and much eſteemed at the beginning of the Reign of King *William* and Queen *Mary*, thoſe celebrated Inſtruments of God's Providence, for the reſtoring our *Religion* and *Liberty*, when the publick Enjoyments of both were juſt expiring.

THE firſt Deſign of thoſe who join'd in this *Religious Fellowſhip* look'd no further than the *mutual Aſſiſtance* and *Conſolation* one of another in their *Chriſtian Warfare*; that by their interchanged Counſels and Exhortat-

on

ons, they might the better maintain their Integrity in the midſt of a *crooked and perverſe Generation.* But as their Senſe of the Bleſſedneſs of *Religion,* and the Value of Immortal Souls increaſed, they could not but exerciſe Bowels of Compaſſion towards ſuch as diſcovered little Concern about theſe important Matters. Which inclined them to endeavour, by Diſcourſe with their *Acquaintance* in proper Seaſons, to preſs upon them thoſe *Divine Arguments* whereby themſelves had been rouzed out of a State of Carnal Inſenſibleneſs. And finding that the *Grace of God* many times ſeconded theſe their Chriſtian Admonitions to good effect, they became more habituated to good Diſcourſe, eſpecially where there was any probability of a civil acceptance of it. Inſomuch that at length they could not but ſtand amazed at the Succeſs which it pleaſed God to give them. One of them (to whom God had given a very deep ſenſe of Reli-

gious Matters, and a very moving manner of expressing it) had such success, that he had (under God) induced most of his intimate Acquaintance at least to an outward *Reformation.*

UPON this they made a private *Order* at one of their Assemblies, that every one should endeavour to bring in one other at least into their *Society*: which they did to good effect. For I heard a very *serious Person* bless God with great Affection, that ever they made such an *Order*, and took such Resolutions: For, said he, this put one of them upon Discourse with me about those things, which I till that time little minded; but now *(said he)* I can never forget them.

THIS may recommend *good Discourse* upon all proper Occasions in Company; which where-ever it is piously designed, and seriously performed, will be blest of God to more excellent Purposes than we can without trial conceive.

THUS

THUS then their *Religious Fraternities* grew and increaſed, even till they became *conſpicuous*, and in ſome degree *famous*: which ſtill induced other *Young Men*, that were of ſober Inclinations, to join with them; and as they multiplied in diſtant Parts of the City, they erected new *Societies* by the Pattern of the old.

THIS conſpicuous Advancement of theſe *Societies*, in Number and Repute, gave occaſion to ſome miſtaken or ill-affected Perſons, to miſrepreſent them to the *Biſhop*, as things leading to *Schiſm*, *Spiritual Pride*, and many other *ill Conſequences*. And this made their *Names* more publick than ever they thought or deſired to have them. For now they were obliged to appear and juſtify their Undertaking: Which they did in a very humble and ſolid *Apology* addreſſed to the *Lord Biſhop of London*; wherein they humbly aſſured his *Lordſhip*, that their only Deſign was to quicken each others Affections toward Spiritual Things,

and to quicken their Preparations for another World, and to this end to assist each other to live in all respects *as it becometh the Gospel.* And that they desired to prosecute this *Christian Design* in none but *Christian Methods*; with due Respect to their *Superiors* in *Church* and *State*, and without any cause of offence to any one. And, in fine, their *Vindication* appear'd so Reasonable and Satisfactory; their *Assemblies* so Regular and Subordinate to the Publick Worship, and their *Designs* so truly Christian and Inoffensive, (all which was attested by several eminent *Divines* on their behalf) that his *Lordship* declared himself satisfied with it: Expressing his Approbation in these words, which are highly worthy of the Mouth of a *Christian Bishop*, saying, *God forbid that I should be against such excellent Designs.*

FOR indeed, any one that peruses the Vindication of their *Societies*, which they drew up upon this, and another

another like occaſion, (the Copies of which ſeveral of them keep by them) will find, that they have given ſuch meek and full Anſwers to every Objection, that they have render'd it very difficult for any Lover of Piety, or any one that knows and deſires the Intereſts of the *Reformation*, to make any reaſonable Objection againſt their *Orders* or *Deſign*.

AS to that which is fear'd by ſome ſober and good People, namely, that it may degenerate in time to a *Sect*, and introduce *Diviſion*; be it conſider'd, that as this would indeed be a very deteſtable Thing, ſo they have moſt induſtriouſly fenced themſelves againſt it, by their *Monthly Communion*; their uſe of many of the *Publick Prayers* conſtantly in their Aſſemblies; their ſetting up *Publick Prayers* in many Churches in the City, and frequenting them in great Bodies, where they appear a very devout part of the Congregation; and their utter diſclaiming of all *Schiſm* and *Faction*;

and finally, their humble deference to their *Ministers*, (without whose Approbation, no *Rule*, *Prayer*, nor *Practice* is allow'd among them.) I say, all these Considerations together, give any sober Person all the Satisfaction that he can reasonably demand, that there is no manner of Ground for such a Jealousie: For indeed they find such improvement in all *Christian Duty*, and such Satisfaction in their *Consciences*, in observing the Constitutions of the Church of *England*, that it is remark'd by some that have made a full enquiry into the Matter, that they could never yet find more than one Instance of any Person of these *Societies*, that have faln from the Publick Communion to any *Sect* or *Separation*.

AND as to that other dark and dismal Case of some of them, who after an appearance of Zeal for this *Pious Undertaking*, and a temporary Partnership in it, have faln off to Vanity and Vice: It is like the cutting

off

off a Member to the reſt of the Body; they conſider it with piercing Grief, Affliction, and Indignation, tho it be no new thing in every Profeſſion of *Religion*, to have ſome *falſe Brethren*. The firſt Planters of *Chriſtianity* had reaſon to ſigh over the Apoſtacy of a *Judas*, a *Nicholas*, a *Demas*, whom the *Love of this preſent World had enſnared*. And I mention this, that every one that maketh Profeſſion of *Religion*, and *thinketh that he ſtandeth, may take heed leſt he fall*: And that they may *dig deep*, and lay a firm Foundation in Faith, Lowlineſs of Mind, and ſound Knowledg of the great Things of our Salvation; and that they be very ſtrict in Chriſtian Watchfulneſs, and in Mortification of the deſires of Sin, and the inward workings of Corruption, even to their Lives end.

TO fall from a *high Profeſſion* of Religion, will prove a very cruſhing and dreadful Fall: And therefore let every *Chriſtian* look well to the Sin-

cerity of his own Heart, that his Spiritual Knowledg, and Holy Vows, may not encreaſe the number of his Stripes at laſt, for want of walking ſutably thereto, and of perſevering therein.

MANY of theſe *unhappy Revolters* from their former ſtrictneſs of Life, are now not able to bear the Reproofs of their perſevering Brethren; they ſhun their Company, they know not how to converſe with them, and are aſham'd to look them in the Face; and ſometimes they pray them to diſturb them no more by their Admonitions, ſince they apprehend all the Danger they threaten them with to be very true, and foreſee their deſperate End ſometimes with a Terror not to be expreſs'd. And their Deſign ſeems to be, to divert thoſe *Melancholy Thoughts* as long as they can, with all the ſenſual Merriment they can invent. So true is that Obſervation, That *Religion can torment thoſe whom it cannot reclaim.*

O!

O! how much greater Comfort is there in the *conſcientious Practice*, than in the *profane Contempt* of Religion, even in the courſe of this Mortal Life! But who can expreſs the infinite difference betwixt them in the Hour of Death, the Day of Judgment, the ſtate of the Reſurrection, and the unchangeable Eternity to come?

TO ſhun this fatal Danger of apoſtatizing from God, and reverſing their Vows made to him; it is the Practice of all theſe *Societies* to partake of the *Holy Supper of our Lord* as frequently as they may, thereby to devote themſelves afreſh to their *good Maſter*, and to confirm their Purpoſes of perpetual Service to Him, and as a means of receiving Spiritual Strength from Him ſo to do.

AND in order to their more adviſed Preparation for ſo ſolemn a Work, there is in ſome one Church or more of this City, a Sermon preached every *Lord's Day* in the Evening (by the procure-

procurement of ſome of theſe *Societies)* on the important Subject of *due Preparation for the Lord's Table, and a meet deportment after it*; by which, great Good has been done, and a deep ſenſe of Religion wrought in many Perſons.

AND by this their Care to acquit their Conſciences, as to this laſt Command of our *dying Lord*, many of them have (by the Grace of God) attained to that *excellent Primitive Temper*, of frequent Communicating without growing formal; not leſſening due Reverence by the frequency, nor extinguiſhing the proper Exerciſes of *Love* to God, *Thankfulneſs* and Spiritual *Joy* at this *Divine Sacrifice* of *Praiſe*, (as ſome unhappily do) by exceſſive and unſeaſonable Terror and Dread.

THERE is ſuch Love amongſt thoſe of them that have faln under my Obſervation, that ſcarce any natural Brothers are ſo vigorouſly Affectionate. I have often beheld their meeting

meeting and parting Embraces with Admiration; and thoſe who are newly admitted are ſoon contracted into the ſame Fellowſhip of *Chriſtian-Brotherhood.*

IT is requir'd of ſuch as deſire to join themſelves to them, That they give the *Society* a ſolemn Account of their Senſe of Spiritual Things, with the *real Motives* which lead them to this Undertaking, and what they ſeriouſly purpoſe as to their future Life. This is many times done in Writing; and I have perus'd ſome of their Papers, and have found them pen'd in ſuch an honeſt, affectionate, and undiſguis'd Stile, with ſuch pious and ſenſible Expreſſions, and in ſo modeſt and humble a manner, that they would mightily affect any Pious Perſon to read them, and move him to break forth into pathetick Praiſes to God, who hath given ſuch Grace to *young Men* in ſo degenerate an Age.

AS for the *Reproaches* which ill People caſt on theſe *Societies*, it is what good

good Things and Perſons have ever met with from the beginning, and muſt be expected to the end of the World. The Scoffs and Grudges of ſuch People againſt any thing, demonſtrate that there is Good in it; and indeed their Commendations may be look'd upon as an effectual Defamation.

UPON ſuch Occaſions of Slanders and Evil-ſpeaking againſt them, I have heard them exhorting and recommending to each other, the true *Chriſtian Armour* of Humility, Patience, and a Reſemblance of our *Bleſſed Saviour*'s Silence under Revilings, admiring that Divine Command of his, of returning *Bleſſing for Curſing*, and of endeavouring to *overcome Evil with Good*; minding one another not to make any mention of their being of ſuch or ſuch a Society, but to make their *Holy Lives* to teſtify, that they are real Chriſtians.

AND thus by exhorting and encouraging one another to Chriſtian Duty,

Duty, the Piety of many of them has appear'd very eminent and exemplary; insomuch that it is evident, even to demonstration, that their Zeal hath in many Places given new Life to the celebration of the *Lord's Supper*, *Publick Prayer*, *Singing of Psalms*, and *Christian Conference*, Duties which were in many Places almost disused, or perform'd in a cool and languishing manner.

THIS is (as far as human Eye can see) the *real and only Design* of these *Societies*, who seem with one Heart to attempt, by the most pious and peaceable Methods, to put a stop to our overflowing Wickedness, remove our Plagues, and to dispose us into a Meetness for the Blessings and gracious Presence of God; by whose Blessing they have of late Years so encreas'd amongst us, that there are now thirty two distinct Bodies of them, within the Compass of the *Bills of Mortality*. And besides those that have been some time erected in the

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Univerſity of *Cambridg*, and in the City of *Gloceſter*, &c. there are others newly formed, not only in this City, but in various parts of this Nation, and even as far as *Dublin* in the Kingdom of *Ireland*; where from three or four Perſons, with which they began, they are now encreas'd to nine or ten *Societies*, containing about three hundred Perſons. And they find ſuch Encouragement there from the Pious *Archbiſhop*, and from ſeveral *Divines*, and other *conſiderable Perſons*, that they have been a means of reviving a great Senſe of *Religion* in many of the Inhabitants of that City, and have begun a very hopeful *Reformation* of Manners among them; the *Archbiſhop* having ſigned his Approbation of their Orders, which are copied from thoſe in *London*. And indeed all theſe good Effects were occaſion'd by the Examples of the *London Societies*, and by the removing of ſome few of the *London Aſſociates* to *Dublin*.

THIS

THIS leads me to consider those *Christian Efforts* which have of late been made towards a *Publick Reformation* of Manners in the *City of London*, and the Parts adjacent, of which I shall particularly treat in the next Chapter.

CHAP. IV.

Of their Endeavouring a Publick Reformation of Manners.

AS our sober Young Men found great Joy in the serious Application of their Souls to Religious Matters, and by the compliance of those who inclined to join with them in it; so were they not a little grieved, from day to day, by the *profane and filthy Conversations* of such as proclaimed their Contempt of God and Religion in the open Streets. And therefore they long'd in their minds for

for a legal ſuppreſſion of theſe *Scandalous Enormities:* Of which they complained often one to another, and much lamented them in their Prayers to God.

IT is true, the *Chriſtian Religion* is the moſt mild and gentle Inſtitution in the whole World, and the fulleſt of Mercy towards Sinners; but not to inſolent and obſtinate Sinners, but to the Humble and Penitent. The *Goſpel* it ſelf is Thunder to the impudent and impenitent Tranſgreſſors, and the *Lamb of God* then ſhews himſelf the *Lion of Judah.*

WE find a couple of *Liars* ſtruck dead in the place for their perſiſtence in one Untruth; and another was *ſtruck blind* for oppoſing the *Chriſtian Faith*; both theſe by the Apoſtles of the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who has appointed *Magiſtrates* to be *Terrors to Evil-doers*, and to this end has girded them with a *Sword* to cut them off, where milder Methods will not reclaim them: and he ſtrictly requires them

them not to *wear this Sword in vain*; that is, that they be ſure to make uſe of it as he has appointed them. And whoſoever declines this in proper Caſes, under the pretence of Mercy and Pity, does it to his own Prejudice and Ruin; like the Man that *refuſed to ſmite the Prophet*, when required to do it, in the *Name of the Lord*, who was *ſlain by a Lion* for his refuſal, as we read 1 *King.* 20. 36.

AND ſince the *Magiſtrate* cannot puniſh a *Tranſgreſſor* (with Righteouſneſs) but upon due Conviction; and whereas few are ſo raſh as to treſpaſs before the Face of a *Righteous Magiſtrate*; it is abſolutely neceſſary in order to ſuppreſs publick Sin, that ſuch Perſons before whom the Illegal Fact is done, take care to inform the Magiſtrate of it: For the execution of Juſtice depends as much upon the proof of the Matter of Fact, as upon the execution of the Penalty of the Law: And where the Informer, or the Magiſtrate fails in their re-

reſpective Duty, Juſtice is obſtructed, the Efficacy of the Law null'd, Iniquity cheriſht, and the Wrath of God provoked. And therefore the Law of God runs thus in the caſe of profane Swearing, *Levit.* 5. 1. *If a Soul ſin, and hear the Voice of Swearing, and is a Witneſs whether he hath ſeen or known of it, if he do not utter it, then he ſhall bear his Iniquity.* And the ſame muſt be concluded of other Enormities puniſhable by Law, by undeniable Parity of Reaſon. For, if none gives Evidence againſt a *Tranſgreſſor*, none can be puniſht, and all *Penal Laws* are vain. Beſides, it is one great Deſign of the Temporal Puniſhments of Vice by the Laws of God and Men, to render it ignominious, and to bring Shame upon the Committers of it, as an Admonition to others, that all may hear and fear, and do no more ſuch Wickedneſs: which End (where ſuch Laws are not put in execution) is utterly loſt, and the contrary takes place, namely,

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the Tranſgreſſor grows impudent, and comes to glory in his ſhame, and hereby the Community is apt to miſtake the Nature of Vice, and to admire it.

OUR aſſociated *Young Men* had due Convictions of theſe things, and were ſenſible that it muſt needs be as great a piece of *Charity* to bring a profane Perſon by light and temporary Puniſhments to ſhun Eternal Torment, as to bind the Hands of ſuch diſtracted People as would otherwiſe tear their own Fleſh, and be their own Murderers; And therefore they were ready to do all that became them in their places to check thoſe *publick and ſcandalous Sins* which were become very *inſolent* and *crying* in this *City*. They only wanted ſome Directions to manage this Affair in a due manner, according to the Law, and to be countenanced by ſome *Magiſtrate* in a Work ſo proper to his Office, and ſo worthy of his regard. And it was not long e're

e're a *ſingular Providence* of God gave them a favourable Opportunity to expreſs their Zeal for his Name in this Matter.

FOR, about this time four or five *Gentlemen* of the *Church of England* (whoſe *Names* deſerve to be had in perpetual Eſteem, tho I have not their leave to publiſh them here) falling into ſerious Diſcourſe upon the melancholy Subject of the Iniquity of the Times, came at laſt to a moſt brave and generous Reſolution to do all that they poſſibly could by the Authority of our Laws, to chaſtiſe and ſuppreſs thoſe impudent *Vices* and *Impieties* which they ſaw very provoking in the ſight of God, and very grievous to the Spirits of all good Men. And foraſmuch as ſome of theſe *Gentlemen* had made the Knowledg of our Laws their Study; they collected an Abſtract of our Penal Laws againſt Vice and Profaneneſs, and drew up ſuch prudential Rules, as are fit for the Legal *Con-*

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viction and Proſecution of ſuch as offend againſt them. And having (in the Year 1691.) by the Motion of the *Lord Biſhop* of *Worceſter*, obtained the *Queen's Pious Letter* to the *Juſtices* of *Peace*, to act as it became them in this important Affair; and the *Juſtices* having made a very good Order thereupon, and the *Lord Mayor* and *Aldermen* doing the like: Theſe *Gentlemen* cauſed Copies of all theſe to be printed, and to be ſent all over the Kingdom, at their own great Expence, and lodged *Blank Warrants* in many Hands all over the City, for the eaſe of Informers, and other Perſons concerned; with many other excellent Expedients to further a General Reformation, which ſurely is the beſt of Works: Of which one of our *Pious Biſhops* has given an Account to the World, to the juſt Honour of theſe *Worthy Gentlemen*, and to the ſhame of ſuch as have reproached and oppoſed their *Righteous and Religious Undertaking*.

NOW,

NOW, this fell in very fitly with the Diſpoſitions of our *Societies*, who thereupon formed themſelves into two conſiderable Bodies, for Information againſt Publick Enormities, the one in *London*, the other in *Weſtminſter*, the better to advance this Work in all Parts, according to their reſpective places of abode. And thereupon they gave punctual Information to ſome Magiſtrate or other of thoſe publick Acts of *Debauchery* and *Profaneneſs* which they obſerved to be committed by Perſons hardned in their Sins; ſtill keeping to the Direction of the *Law*, and the *Rules* ſubſervient thereunto which thoſe *Gentlemen* had given them.

BUT *Wickedneſs* being at that time inſolent and unuſed to reſtraint, theſe Perſons met with very outragious Reſentments, and with bitter Reproaches and Threats from the paſſionate Lovers of Vice: Yea, they often ran the hazard of their Lives in the proſecution of this Deſign; which they

they underwent with Chriſtian Courage, being ſupported (under God) by divers of our *Biſhops* and *London Divines*, who told them, That if any of them ſuffer'd in ſo Divine a Work, they would very much reſemble the *Martyrs* and *Confeſſors* of Chriſt, and receive the Reward of it in the other World. And in this reſpect, the *Right Reverend Biſhop of Gloceſter*, and thoſe worthy Divines Dr. *Horneck*, Dr. *Jekyl*, and Mr. *Edward Stephens*, have moſt eminently ſignalized their Zeal for their *Great Maſter* and his Work.

AND whereas our *Young Men* found it very often objected in common Diſcourſe, that they were only a few raw Youths that engaged in this Work, which ſeem'd particularly to exaſperate the Perſons proſecuted by them; they greatly wiſht for the concurrence of ſome grave and elderly Perſons to countenance and enſpirit them in this *difficult Enterprize*.

TO this our Good God, who would not ſuffer this *Excellent Work* (undertaken purely for his ſake) to drop, was pleaſed by his *good Providence* to adminiſter a very ſeaſonable Support. For it fell out about this time, that the good Service of ſeveral Men (moſt of them Houſe-keepers) in the *Tower-Hamlets* came to be known, which was begun on this occaſion.

THE Inhabitants of thoſe *Hamlets* being much perplexed by pilfering People, Pick-locks, Houſe-breakers, and ſuch ill Perſons; ſome of them began to inquire into the Places which were ſuſpected to harbour that ſort of People. And by tracing out their Places of Reſort, they ſoon div'd into the true ſource of their Grievances; namely, That theſe vicious Perſons living in ſhameful *lewdneſs* and *idleneſs*, and having no Income by *Trade* or *Eſtate* to maintain them in it, they betook themſelves to *Robbery*, *Shoplifting*, *Burglary*, and *picking of Locks*

and

and *Pockets*, to maintain their expenſive Luſts and lewd Companions.

UPON this, ſome of the ſober Inhabitants of theſe *Hamlets* ſet themſelves with great Concern, and undaunted Courage, to pull down the very *Neſts* of theſe *Diſorders*. They got *Warrants* for ſearch, and brought all ſuſpected Perſons to clear themſelves in a legal way, and where it was requiſite, they demanded Security for their Good-behaviour; they proſecuted and ſuppreſt all known Houſes of *Bawdery*, and brought the Keepers of them to legal Puniſhment. And whereas ſome of thoſe who engaged in this Work were of the *Publick Communion*, and others of different *Perſwaſions*, their leſſer Differences in Matters of *Religion*, did not in the leaſt divide them in proſecuting of theſe things which they ſaw were directly contrary to all Religion. And ſuch as did not act perſonally in this Affair, yet perceiving the *Good* that

came of it, were inclined to contribute towards it.

BUT there were ſome things wanting in this Undertaking, in the defect of which it was much retarded, and had like to have ſunk. The one was a *methodical way* of proceeding, for want of which their Endeavours were neither ſo orderly, nor ſo effectual as they afterwards prov'd. They alſo wanted a more compact *Incorporation* of their Members into one *Society* or Body, which might be moved and guided by the ſame prudential Methods, as if they all proceeded from the ſame Soul. And laſtly, their *Fund* was low, and inſufficient to defray the Expence of ſuch an Affair. For, ſince the apprehenſion of lewd *Ruffians*, and deſperate *Bullies*, needed a good number of *Officers* and other *Aſſiſtants*; and ſince the Proceſs of our Law is not a little chargable, it muſt be allowed, that *Money is the Sinews of*

this

this War, as well as others.

NOW our aforesaid *Societies for giving of Informations*, having considered these Circumstances, and having admired the *Zeal* and *Courage* of those honest and excellent Men in these *Hamlets*, and observed how well they suted to make up what themselves wanted in Years and Experience, they resolved to concur with them, that their *united Forces* might be the more victorious: And the *Gentlemen* before-mentioned gave their hearty Consent to the Match, and (like kind Fathers) did not a little augment the *Dowry*.

AND now their Resolved Work went on with happy Success, the one emulating and pushing on the other. And in all Cases they acted regularly, and in conformity to Rules approved by the *Learned in the Law*. They chose two *Stewards* to keep their Cash, and to keep an exact Account of all *Contributions* and *Disbursments*. They had a set place of assembling

together, in which they obſerved a regular Method of Propoſing, Debating, and Concluding every thing; and had a *Notary* on all Occaſions to attend them: and finally, at this weekly Meeting, they concerted thoſe Meaſures which they proſecuted with Vigour in the *City* and *Suburbs*, and with very great Succeſs.

FOR they were inſtrumental in putting down ſeveral *open Markets* that had been kept on the *Lord's Day*; and in ſuppreſſing ſome hundreds of *Houſes of ill Fame*, bringing the Frequenters of them to due Shame and Puniſhment. And by the means of this *Society* alone, about 2000 *Perſons* have been legally proſecuted and convicted, either as keepers of *Houſes of Bawdery* and *Diſorder*, or as *Whores*, *Night-walkers*, and the like; and the Names of theſe Delinquents are ſet down in *three black Liſts* which they have printed: All which have been ſentenced by the *Magiſtrates* as the Law directs, and have accordingly been

been punished, (many of them divers times) either by *Carting*, *Whipping*, *Fining*, *Imprisonment*, or suppressing their *Licences*.

THEY have also been instrumental to put down several *Musick-houses* which had degenerated into notorious *Nurseries of Lewdness and Debauchery*: As it appeared by a Paper printed on this occasion, wherein it was proved, that many Persons had been ensnared by the rude Company which usually resorted to those Houses, to the Ruin of their Honour; and some to that utter extirpation of Modesty, that some of both Sexes had shamelessly danced naked in these licentious Brothels; which Disorder had abounded to that degree, that above twenty Murders had been committed in them within a very little time. All which must needs render them odious in the Eyes of all sober People.

BESIDES this, the Members of this *Society* have legally convicted

multitudes of notorious Swearers, Sabbath-breakers, and Drunkards: and their Proceedings in all these Cases have been so strictly legal and unblamable, that they have for several Years past received great Countenance in the several *Courts of Judicature*; and have found very considerable Encouragement from the *Lord Mayor* and *Court of Aldermen*, who have honourably contributed towards the great Expence of so great and useful an Undertaking.

BUT yet these Endeavours of so general a *Good*, did not proceed without many a Rub; if it had, it would have been the first time that Vertue had been advanced with Ease and Smoothness. We must have concluded, that either *Vertue* or *Vice* had lost its Nature, if the one could supplant and dethrone the other without passionate Opposition: Yea we might have thought that the *Devil* had lost his Envy to the Good of Mankind, or that all the Legions of the *Infernal*

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Pit had been caſt into a *deep Sleep*, ſhould they have ſuffer'd ſuch a brave Onſet to be made upon the Territories of *Darkneſs*, without making all the Intereſt they had againſt it. It was therefore no wonder at all, that the Undertakers of this *Divine Work* met with many Difficulties to ſtrugle with in the Proſecution of it.

IN truth, they experienced not only the rude Aſſaults of licentious *Debauchees*, which they expected; but too often the Brow-beatings and Diſcouragement of ſuch as were bound by the tremendous Bond of an *Oath*, and the Divine Truſt of *Authority* to do otherwiſe, which was the more difficult to bear.

I have known the Day in which ſeveral Perſons have with extream ſorrow complained, that they had ſpent above half of it in going from the Houſe of one *Juſtice of Peace* to another, before they could get a Warrant ſigned. Such Complaints were too-frequent, and alas! too true.

BUT there was great Hope of a full Redreſs to this Grievance, when there came forth a Pious Proclamation from *their Majeſties*, Jan. 21. 169½. *requiring all Magiſtrates, Eccleſiaſtical and Civil, in their reſpective Stations, to execute the Laws of this Realm againſt Profaneneſs and Immorality, as they would anſwer it to Almighty God, and upon Pain of their Majeſties higheſt Diſpleaſure*; *complaining alſo* (moſt juſtly) *That by a long continued Neglect and Connivance of the Magiſtrates and Officers concerned, theſe diſſolute Enormities had univerſally ſpread themſelves, to the diſhonour of God, and the ſcandal of our Holy Religion*, &c. This Proclamation was occaſioned *by the pious Addreſs of our Arch-biſhops and Biſhops to their Majeſties*, as the Preamble of it declares.

AND ſince this did not fully accompliſh its End, it was followed (*May* 16. 1693.) by a perſonal Excitation of the *Juſtices* of *Middleſex*, to further this work with Vigour, by the

the *Lord Keeper* in a Speech made to them to that purpose, *by her Majesty's Special Command:* and partly by these Supports, but chiefly by the *good Hand of God* upon it, this Enterprize has gained Ground, notwithstanding the many ill turns that have been done it.

INSOMUCH, that there are now near twenty *Societies* of various *Qualities* and *Functions*, formed in a Subordination and Correspondency one with another, and engaged in this Christian Design in and about this *City* and *Suburbs:* All which have their set Hours and Places of meeting, to direct, support, and execute this their Undertaking.

IN this Number of the *Societies for Reformation* here given, I do not include any of the thirty two *Religious Societies* before mentioned. For tho they all agree in the love of Vertue, and dislike of Vice, yet their first and more direct Design of Association seems to be distinguish'd thus: In that the *Societies for Reformation* bent their

their utmoſt Endeavours from the firſt to ſuppreſs *publick Vice*; whilſt the *Religious Societies* endeavour'd chiefly to promote *Religion* in their own Breaſts, tho they have ſince been eminently inſtrumental in the Publick Reformation. The *former* endeavour'd to take away the Reproach of our Religion, by curbing the Exorbitances of its Profeſſors; the *latter* attempted to retrieve that Holy Vigour in the Practice of Religion which becomes *Chriſtians*. And whereas theſe *latter* are all of the *Church of England*, and fervent Lovers, and ſtrict obſervers of her *Publick Worſhip*; the *former* are compoſed of all ſuch as bear a hearty Indignation againſt Vice and Impiety, tho of different Perſwaſions in ſome Circumſtantials of Religion. For in this Caſe, the Members of our Church do not ſay to any Lovers of Piety, as *Zerubbabel* to the Adverſaries of *Judah*, *Ye have nothing to do to build with us*: For they conſider Vice as an Enemy

to

to human Nature, and as tending to the ruin of the whole World. We do therefore with humble Thankfulneſs to Almighty God acknowledg the Brotherly Aſſiſtance which is given us by ſome of our *Diſſenting Brethren* (eſpecially thoſe of the *Preſbyterian Perſwaſion*) in endeavouring to diſcountenance and ſuppreſs publick Enormities, which have been ſo generally ſpread, and ſo long taking Root, that they need the help of all Hands to pluck them up. And it is not only in *London*, but in *Nottingham*, *Shrewsbury*, and other Parts, that they join hand in hand with thoſe of our Communion, in order to ſuppreſs the Vices of the Place. *It is God that maketh Men of one Mind in a Houſe*, much more in a *Nation*: and I beſeech the *God of Peace* to bring all that ſincerely love and fear him, to perfect Peace and Coalition: For this we pray inceſſantly in our *Publick Service*, wherein we entreat the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that he would

would *bring all ſuch as profeſs his Holy Name to agree in the Truth of his Holy Word, and to live in Unity and godly Love.* When once this ſhall come to paſs, we may hope that the Enemies to the *Fundamental Principles* and *Practices* of our *Holy Religion*, being *covered with Shame, may ſeek unto God:* and then (as an *eminent French Refugee* obſerved) **will the Engliſh Church and Nation be thrice happy.**

THESE Endeavours to ſtop the wide mouth of our *crying Sins*, have (by the Bleſſing of God) ſo far ſucceeded, that the Impudence of lewd Women, and the Blaſphemies of licentious Tongues are manifeſtly abated in our Streets, and the works of Darkneſs ſeem to be retiring to their proper Scene, the *obſcureſt Corners* that can be found, as moſt remote from human Obſervation and Puniſhment.

BUT the baniſhment of Vice from the publick View, is not all the Good that has been done by theſe legal Proſecutions,

ſecutions, (tho that is moſt highly valuable, as it takes away publick *Scandals* and *Temptations*) but there have been many Inſtances of Perſons apprehended in ill Houſes and Company; who having ſomething of Modeſty and Tenderneſs remaining, have been alarmed out of this ill way of Life, and have afterwards acknowledged the *Mercy* of God, and the *Charity* of Men, in *pulling them as Firebrands out of the Fire.*

AND indeed, ſince the *Magiſtrates* chaſtizing of wicked People is an *Ordinance of God*, it is ſcarce to be queſtion'd but that it is deſigned for the *Spiritual Good* of particular Men, as well as the *Publick Good* of *Societies:* and what doubt can there be, but that God does many times turn ſuch legal Corrections to infinite Advantages? The *Magiſtrate* is the *Civil Parent:* and as God has committed the *Sword* to him to cut off intolerable Miſcreants, ſo has he given him a *Rod* to chaſtize Offenders in

leſſer

leſſer Matters: and to him methinks we may as well apply the words of *Solomon*, as to the Natural Parent (Prov. 23. 14.) *Thou ſhalt beat him with the Rod, and ſhalt deliver his Soul from Hell.* Which if duly conſidered, would ſerve to quicken *Magiſtrates* in this glorious Work of ſaving the Souls of Men from *eternal Torments* (which would bring a great ſhare of their Glory into their own Boſoms.) And it would alſo tend to allay the paſſionate Reſentments of ſuch as fall under the Correction of the *Magiſtrates Diſcipline*, if they did but foreſee the invaluable kindneſs of ſtopping their way (tho with Thorns) to prevent their running into the *Infernal Pit.* O that Men had Faith to make a due Eſtimate of theſe certain and neceſſary Conſequences of things! which a few Moments will exemplify upon every Soul of us in *Eternal Bliſs or Torment.*

IT was the deep ſenſe of theſe great Things, which firſt engaged the Hearts

Hearts and Hands of thoſe few Pious *Gentlemen* in this moſt Noble Work, who do not now (bleſſed be God) act alone in it. Several other *Gentlemen* and eminent *Citizens* are now incorporated with them; and they meet frequently to ſuperintend, direct, and purſue *this beſt of Works* (as one of our Pious *Biſhops* calls it) conſulting the beſt and moſt adviſable Methods to carry it on, ſpending a great deal of time weekly, and ſometimes daily in it, and furthering it by very large and honourable Contributions. And by theſe means many thouſands of vicious and profane Perſons have been brought to juſt Puniſhment; to which the late excellent Law againſt *profane Swearing* and *Curſing* has been very ſerviceable: and were it but enlarged in a Line or two, to make the Work of *Information* eaſier, it would ſoon baniſh the Helliſh ſenſeleſs Sin of *Blaſphemy* out of this Nation; as alſo out of the *Kingdom* of *Ireland*, where it is likewiſe made a Law, and is very

vigo-

vigorouſly put in Execution: concerning which a *Perſon of Quality* writes thus from *Dublin*, in a Letter to his Friend in *London*, Octob. 28. 1697.

" THE *Reformation* goes on in this " *City* very vigorouſly: When we " were preſented with a *thouſand* " *Warrants* againſt profane Swear- " ing, by a Gentleman from *London*, " it was thought we ſhould never " have needed more: but thoſe have " all been put in Execution, and we " are now upon printing a *third thou-* " *ſand* of them more. The laſt *Lord's* " *Day*, I believe there were eight or " nine Pounds levied in *Ale-Houſes*; " and above a Hundred *Bakers* have " paid within this laſt Quarter for " profaning the *Lord's Day*, in the " Buſineſs of their Trade, beſides " *Taylors*, *Drovers*, and others; and " *Bawdy-Houſes* and *Whores* are hunt- " ed down with a high Hand. *Bride-* " *wel* is filled with them, and this " without any great Aſſiſtance from " the

" the *Magiſtracy.* Some Perſons of " our *Societies* being put upon the " *Grand-Jury* for the City, do it ef- " fectually: ten or twelve lewd Wo- " men have been taken up in a Night, " in the Houſes as well as Streets; " and this twice or thrice a Week. " But I muſt add however, that this " *Reformation* in every part of it, is " beholden to our *Recorder*, who " ſhews more Zeal and Application " to it, than ever any *Magiſtrate* in " *London* or *Middleſex* has done ſince " I have been acquainted with theſe " Matters.

THERE is alſo a *Society* of this kind in *Drogheda*, in *Manouth*, and in *Kilkenny:* and ſeveral *Divines* are endeavouring to plant them in other parts of the *Kingdom* of *Ireland.* But I return nearer home.

TO awaken a juſt ſenſe of the Neceſſity of *Reformation* of Manners in the City of *London*, there are four Sermons in the Year preached on this weighty Subject at *Bow-Church* in *Cheap-*

Cheapſide; namely, on every Monday next following the four uſual *Quarter-days*, about Eleven in the Morning: And the like is done by *Diſſenters* on four other Days.

AND by the Bleſſing of Almighty God upon theſe Endeavours, a very conſiderable ſenſe of *Religion* has been revived in many of this *Nation*, and a very conſpicuous Check given to *Debauchery*. Inſomuch that the general *Odium*, and the threatning Dangers of informing againſt Vice and Profaneneſs are almoſt extinguiſht, and the bleſſed Work of *Reformation* ſet into ſuch an excellent and ſucceſsful Method, that the outward part of it would ſoon be effected, would but ſome few in every Street or Pariſh, who are of Place and Power, pull their Hands out of their Boſoms to engage in this *honourable and neceſſary Work*; or would others, who are of Ability, but contribute as it becomes them, towards the Expence of it. For the apprehending

hending of lewd People, (as was before obſerved) and the proſecution of them in the courſe of our Law is very chargable; inſomuch, that near a *thouſand Pounds* have been expended in this Work by one of theſe *Societies* alone, within the ſpace of the laſt four Years: As it may be proved by *their Book of Accounts*, to any one that deſires it for any good End.

AND that none may be diſcouraged on the account of the general Overflowing of Vice, and the diſproportionable fewneſs of Hands engaged to put a ſtop to it; let it but be conſidered, that the chief part of this Oppoſition to *Publick Immorality*, has been occaſioned by the meeting of four or five private Perſons together; who duly conſidering and bewailing the Height and Extent of the Sins of this Nation, came to a Reſolution of doing their utmoſt to oppoſe it, in the due courſe of our Laws. An Attempt which, methinks, ſeemed as Generous and Heroick, as that of *Jonathan*

nathan and his Armour-bearer, who being inſpirited by God, reſolved to attack a whole Army of *Philiſtins* encampt on a vaſt Hill: But the *Lord of Hoſts* who led them on in this noble Enterprize, did ſucceſsfully carry them thorow it, to the utter Diſcomfiture of thoſe numerous Enemies of God. And ſince we may without raſhneſs conclude, that this Effort againſt publick Sins has the ſame *Original* with that of *Jonathan*, we hope it may at laſt attain the ſame *End*, tho this Attempt againſt numerous and heightned Enormities has as great Diſadvantages as that, in humane Eſtimate.

O! what a Field of Honour lies here, before all Perſons among us! In which *Magiſtrates* and *Miniſters* are more eſpecially concerned to be *Leaders*, who are by their Offices deſigned to direct the Conſciences, and regulate the Converſations of Men. I beſeech the Almighty and All-good God to inſpirit and determine them effectu-

effectually to this Work, to which he loudly calls them, a Work abſolutely neceſſary, not only to our Proſperity, but Subſiſtence; and for want of which we are almoſt undone.

AND in truth, the Glory of Almighty God, and the Support of our Church and State, are ſo manifeſtly concerned herein; that I cannot ſee how the *Miniſters of Juſtice*, or of *Divine Service*, will be able to anſwer the unchriſtian Neglect of it, before the Lord Jeſus Chriſt (the Judg of All) before *whoſe Judgment-Seat we muſt all appear*, and that very ſpeedily. Where two *Armies* are engaged in a bloody and uncertain Battel, how will thoſe *Regiments* anſwer it to their *Prince*, who ſtood by and idly lookt on, without ſtriking one hearty ſtroke in his Cauſe, to whom they vowed a *Military Faithfulneſs* to their Death? But above the reſt, how will the *Officers* of thoſe daſtardly Troops anſwer it to their *Sovereign*, who dreaded a little Danger and Hardſhip in

his

his Service, more than his *Royal Diſpleaſure?*

AH Sirs! if we are now backward to contribute our utmoſt Endeavours in our ſeveral Stations towards the ſuppreſſing thoſe impudent and ſcandalous Vices, whereby *our God and his Holy Religion* are ſo outragiouſly blaſphemed: If we preſer carnal Eaſe, the Favour of Men, or any worldly Intereſt, before the Honour of our God, and the Propagation of Religion: What inſupportable Shame, Horror and Regret will at laſt ſeize us, and for ever torment us! And therefore I again beſeech the *Holy Spirit* to excite and fix in us all (even in *Magiſtrates*, *Miniſters*, and all Ranks of *People*) a vigorous and effectual Zeal for his Holy Name and Will; and a juſt Concern for the languiſhing Repute of the *Chriſtian Name*, and of the *Reformed Religion.*

AND as for all thoſe various *Degrees* of Men who have already ſet their Hands to this excellent Work, may

may they never ſlacken their Hands, or pull them back. Let me entreat them to act in it with a Zeal, Conſtancy and Purity of Intention, ſutable to ſo Divine an Employment as that they engage in, to ſo great and good a Maſter as they ſerve, and to that infinite Reward which they may expect. Be not ſuch Enemies to your ſelves, as to be *weary of well-doing*, ſince in a ſhort *time you will reap, if you faint not.*

O Chriſtians! Look unto Jeſus, who not only *underwent the Contradiction of Sinners*, but *endured the Croſs*, and *deſpiſed the Shame, for the Glory which was ſet before him.* Remember, that as a *Curſe* is threatned to ſuch as *do the Work of the Lord negligently:* So a *Crown* is prepared for thoſe *who are faithful unto Death.*

THE Time of our Warfare is but ſhort, and the Difficulty of it will be much ſweetened by the *promiſed Comforter*, and the Reward of well-doing will be of infinite Value, and eternal

Duration. And as no Work in the World will be more commended of our Supreme Judg at laſt, than this of Reformation; ſince he himſelf *ſits as a Refiner's Fire, and as Fullers Soap*, to purify and cleanſe his People from their Sins; and ſince he will e're long conſume that Reprobate *Silver*, which is not effectually refined by thoſe means of *Purification* which he hath ordained: On all theſe accounts, I ſay, we have no Concern upon Earth ſo great, as to acquit our ſelves well in this our Spiritual Calling, not *being ſlothful, but diligent Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.*

AND here I cannot but call upon our *Diſſenting Brethren*, that as they have manifeſted a Chriſtian Spirit in aſſiſting us to ſuppreſs Vice, they would do no leſs in endeavouring to diſcountenance Strife, and to reſtore Unity. And let me entreat them, even by the Bowels of our common *Lord and Saviour*, that they ſtudiouſly

ouſly endeavour to diſpoſe their Young Ones to follow after things which make for *Peace, Unity and Order*, (the deſire of which ſeems deeply impreſt on the Spirits of *our Societies of Young Men*) that the Church of God may enjoy more peaceable and flouriſhing Days in the next Age, than it has in this.

THE making of our Peace with God by effectual *Reformation*, and of *Union* among our ſelves by mutual Charity and Condeſcenſion, are the happieſt Works that any Perſon can apply himſelf to on Earth. The Satisfaction and peaceable Fruits of it here would be exceeding great, and the Reward of it hereafter inexpreſſible.

NOW theſe *Societies* aforementioned, ſeem in a great meaſure fitted to carry on both theſe great Deſigns; if at leaſt there be any hope of ſuch ineſtimable Bleſſings, left to ſuch a profligate People as we are: For they have been inſtrumental to bring ſeve-

ral *Quakers and Enthuſiaſtick People* to Baptiſm, and to a ſober Mind; and of the Converſion of many profane Perſons; and of bringing others to legal Puniſhment, who appeared otherwiſe incorrigible.

AND many of our *Miniſters* have found by Experience, (as they have aſſured me) that the planting of one of theſe *Societies* in their *Pariſh*, has been a means of enlarging their *Congregations* and *Communions* to a very great Increaſe; and not only ſo, but of introducing a more devout Deportment in all *Publick Ordinances*. So that it is greatly to be wiſht, that every *Parochial Miniſter* would endeavour to erect a *Society* of this Nature in his Pariſh, which he might do, if he could but find two or three Young Men, or Houſe-keepers in it, of pious Inclinations, and a ſober Life, (and if ſuch a number as this cannot be found in any place, it is worſe than *Sodom*) and He may begin a *Society* with theſe (as many of

thoſe which are now numerous, began at firſt) till more be added to them *by the Grace of God.* A thing of this Nature heartily undertaken for the Glory of God, and attended with Prayer, Diligence and Patience, could hardly miſcarry. And a good Miniſter would find his Work happily furthered by ſuch a *Pious Nurſery* of Youth; and the poor Neighbourhood not a little comforted by their *Charity:* Yea, the very Money which is by the Law forfeited to the Poor, by Swearing, Drunkenneſs, and profaning the Lord's Day, would be a ſeaſonable Relief to the Poor in theſe hard times; for by theſe Penalties the Sum of 55 *Pounds* was lately raiſed in one Pariſh of this City within the ſpace of one Year.

AND tho this may well be numbred amongſt their *Charities* to the Poor, eſpecially ſince the late Law againſt profane Swearing has made the Forfeitures to the Poor ariſe very high to ſome who will not forbear

it even after the *ſecond Conviction*: Yet their own Perſonal Alms to proper Objects of Charity, are very conſiderable. Their Contributions towards the Excellent Deſign of erecting *Libraries* in our *Foreign Plantations*, is computed to amount to one hundred Pounds and upwards: And what they have expended in freeing of *Priſoners*, and relieving poor *Families*, is not inconſiderable.

AND beſides, their manner of diſburſing their *Bounty* to ſick and diſtreſſed People, is ſuch as renders it a double Benefit. For they uſually ſend their Alms by the hands of two or more of their moſt ſerious Members, who make a perſonal enquiry into their Neceſſities, and uſually introduce ſome ſeaſonable Diſcourſe ſutable to the Affliction of the *Perſon* or *Family* which they relieve; which many times proves the better *Charity* of the two. For the poor afflicted Perſons being partly awakened by the *Rod* of God upon them; and being ſur-

ſurprized by ſuch a *Viſit* and *Bounty* from Perſons unknown to them, and not a little pleaſed to hear ſuch ſavoury Speeches drop from the Lips of *Young Perſons*: All theſe things together have ſometimes been happily inſtrumental in propagating a Senſe of *Religion* in ſome Perſons who never before felt any thing of it; and of exciting it where it had before taken place. So that I have ſometimes had greater Thanks from ſome who (upon my Recommendation) have enjoy'd theſe Spiritual Expreſſions of their *Charity*, *Compaſſion*, and *Conſolation*, than for their *other Bounty*; tho they have confeſt themſelves almoſt raviſht in the conſideration of both.

IT has ſometimes pleaſed God to reduce ſome of their own Members by Sickneſs, or other means, to a low Condition; and then they have duly call'd to mind the *Apoſtolick Rule* of *ſhewing Piety at Home*; they have afforded them ſutable Supplies when

living, and buried them decently when dead. And as they have found themselves greatly affected by *Funeral Sermons*, so they usually procure one at the *Funeral* of any of their *Society*; as considering that no *Sermon* is like to come with such Power upon Mens Souls, as that which is enforc'd by a moving Object of Mortality, to alarm the very Senses of Men, and to give a mortifying blow to all Carnality: So that tho this their Charity begins at Home, it does not end there.

IT was an Act of great good Nature, and savoured no less of a *Spirit* becoming our *Merciful Religion*, which some of them expres's'd towards a poor *Widow* upon her Death-Bed, whom they found in extream Trouble, for fear lest her two young Children should be cast upon the Charity of her Relations, who were *Papists*, and by that means be brought up in their Errors; it being in the Reign of *K. James* II.

NOW

NOW to eaſe her diſtreſſed Spirit, ſome of theſe *Young Men* undertook to take care both to maintain and educate theſe forlorn *Orphans*; giving the poor expiring Widow their promiſe ſo to do; And this greatly conduced to her quiet and comfortable Death, for ſhe had lived a very good Life. And they fully diſcharged their Truſt: They took care that the two Children (the one being five Years of Age, the other ſix) were maintain'd and inſtructed till they were fit to become Apprentices; and then got them good Places, by which they are put into a Capacity of living very comfortably.

I was once preſent at one of their *Conferences*, when a very poor Man came with moſt earneſt Affection to return them Thanks for what they had done, both for his Body and Soul. It ſeems he was a perfect Stranger to them all, and to every other Perſon in the Place where God caſt him down by a ſharp and long Sickneſs, in which

(as he ſaid) his Body and Soul had like to have periſh'd together. He had lived a very ill Life, and been much diſuſed to the *Ordinances* of God, by reaſon of his Sea-faring Life: and being now come on ſhore ſick, and being above a hundred Miles from his Abode and Acquaintance, he fell into great Want. Upon which, ſome of this *Society* perceiving his Diſtreſs, recommended him to the reſt; and they readily allowed him a weekly Penſion for eight Weeks together, till he was recovered. And one of the *Society* being a *Chirurgeon*, carefully dreſſed a very grievous Sore which he had, and by God's Bleſſing, reſtored it to perfect Soundneſs. Others of them went to him and read good Books by his Bed, which tended to the improvement of God's Viſitation upon him: They alſo fetch'd the *Miniſter* of the Place to him, who viſited him often, and prayed by him, and got a Collection from ſome charitable Neighbours for him. And upon the

whole,

whole, he recovered, and ſeem'd to be a reformed Man, and came then to render his Praiſes to God, and Thanks to his Chriſtian Friends, for that which had been done for him.

I mention but one of Multitudes of ſuch Inſtances, which ſeem to demonſtrate ſuch *Compaſſion* and *Condeſcenſion* of Spirit as is eſſential to a *Chriſtian*, and which was the *Beauty and Glory* of *Primitive Chriſtianity*.

BEFORE I conclude, it may be expected that I give ſome Deſcription of the *Weekly Conferences*, and *joint Devotions* of our *Religious Societies*: But I need not inſiſt on this, ſince the Method of both is hereto annexed, partly for their Uſe, and partly to prevent Miſrepreſentation by falſe Reports. So that I ſhall only add, That as they uſe very affecting Preſaces before they pray to God, or praiſe his Great and Holy Name, to raiſe and fix their inward Devotion; ſo they always uſe a very reverend outward Deportment in the Worſhip of God, that their Body

Body may not ſeem to mock or diſapprove of that which their Soul is doing: Which is ſurely agreeable to all *ſober Reaſon*, and *ſound Religion*. Our *Creator*, *Redeemer*, and *Sanctifier*, ought to be owned, worſhiped, and glorified with thoſe Bodies (as well as thoſe Souls) which his *Almighty Power*, *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs*, hath created, redeemed, doth ſanctify, and will glorify. So that in Prayer, they all kneel, according to the direction of the Spirit of God, *Pſal.* 95. 6. And according to our Bleſſed Saviour's Example; *Luke* 22. 41. *He kneeled down and prayed.* And in *ſinging of Pſalms*, or any other *ſolemn Doxology*, they ſtand up; which is ſurely the fitteſt Poſture for this exalted part of God's Worſhip. And if I may ſpeak my own Experiences, I think we ſhall find our Souls greatly raiſed by our Bodily Reverence. Tho it be ſtill allowed, That the ſpiritual Reverence of the Soul is vaſtly the chiefeſt, and that in all bodily Weakneſs, and o-

ther

ther neceſſary Impediments, *God will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice.*

MANY of them meet together at each others Houſes alſo in the Evening of many *Feaſts of the Church* and *Holy Days*; where they diſcourſe ſeriouſly on the Subject-matter of the Day; by which they find themſelves much informed in many eſſential Parts of the *Chriſtian Religion.*

THESE their Holy Purpoſes have for a conſiderable time been cheriſhed and improved by ſome of our Pious *Biſhops*, who have often preach'd to them on theſe Occaſions: And in particular, one of them has for many Years allowed them the uſe of his Church, and been preſent at the Sermons which they procured, and has alſo written a moſt excellent *Vindication* of theſe beginnings of *Reformation.* And another of them (who has ſometime given a moſt illuſtrious Inſtance of his Care in cultivating Youth, by training up *Young Scholars* for the Miniſtry, not only at his own

Expence,

Expence, but by his perſonal Inſtruction of them) hath publiſhed to the World the great Delight with which our late *Pious Queen* received the Account of this hopeful Method of reforming of Youth by theſe *Societies*, and with what Concern ſhe often inquired after it. His words are theſe: *She did hearken carefully after every thing that ſeemed to give ſome Hope, that the next Generation ſhould be better than the preſent, with a particular Attention: She heard of a Spirit of Devotion and Piety that was ſpreading it ſelf among the Youth of this great City, with a true Satisfaction: She enquired often and much about it, and was glad to hear it went on and prevailed.* Eſſay, *pag.* 118.

In this deſired *Reformation of Manners*, our *Right Reverend Dioceſan* (the Lord Biſhop of *London*) has likewiſe appeared ſeveral times with great Honour. His *Lordſhip*'s Letter to his *Clergy* about eight Years ſince, (purſuant to the Scope of his *Majeſty*'s *Procla-*

Proclamation and ſpecial Orders relating to this Affair) was very ſerviceable to this Purpoſe. In which his *Lordſhip* required all the *Miniſters* of his *Dioceſs* (upon certain *Lord's Days* therein prefixt) to read the ſeveral *Acts of Parliament* againſt Vice and Profaneneſs, in the Audience of their reſpective Congregations; and at the ſame time to bend the Scope of their *Sermons* againſt the Sins thereby condemned, that the Force and Terror of the Laws of God and Men might at once make the utmoſt Impreſſion in the Conſciences of their Hearers, in order to reform the *notorious Tranſgreſſions* of both.

AND foraſmuch as this *Injunction* was miſtaken by ſome, as if it reached no further than the Year in which it was dated; his *Lordſhip* was pleaſed in his laſt Viſitation of the *Clergy of Middleſex*, to remind them of the continuance of his Injunction in that Matter, requiring them to obſerve it according to the *Order* before ſent them.

YEA,

YEA, further yet, that nothing may be wanting to awaken such a vigilant and conſciencious Care in the diſcharge of this Great Duty, as is neceſſary to the Character of a *Miniſter of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and to expreſs our Thankfulneſs to *Almighty God* for the marvelous Mercies which he has vouchſafed to this *Nation*; his *Lordſhip* has newly directed another Letter to his *Clergy*, wherein he complains of the Nonobſervance of his *Majeſty*'s Injunctions of *Febr.* 13. 16$\frac{1}{2}$. (which related to their reading of the *Laws* of the Land againſt *Vice* and *Impiety*) and takes occaſion (from the Aſſurance which his *Majeſty* has given to the Publick, in his late Speech to both Houſes of *Parliament*, That *he will make it one of his chief Cares to ſuppreſs Profaneneſs and Immorality*) to repreſent to his Clergy, *what a ſhameful Reproach it would be to them, (a great part of whoſe Buſineſs it ought to be, continually to watch againſt ſuch Sins) to be found*

found tardy in those Opportunities which the Laws have given them to warn People of their wicked Courses.

AND it is greatly hoped, That no *Minister* hereby admonished, will be so unmindful of the Sacred Vows of *Christianity*, and the Special Obligations of his Holy *Function*, or so negligent of the Interests of his *Heavenly Master*, and of the *Souls* committed to his Charge; as to disregard so solemn and seasonable an Admonition.

SEVERAL other of our *Bishops* have also of late sent very pious *Letters* to the *Clergy* under their *Episcopal Care*, earnestly pressing their most studious Concern to propagate sincere Piety in their several *Parishes*, by their Holy Doctrine and Examples.

AND truly, since there is evidently so much Goodness in these *Societies* and *Designs*, as to give us Hope *they are of God*; we have thence a solid ground to hope *that they will not come to nought.*

IN

IN this Hope I have often been encouraged, when I have obſerved with what Delight and Induſtry they proſecute their Holy Purpoſes. I have known ſome of them (who have been at their own Liberty) come out of the midſt of the *City* (after their Shops have been ſhut) three or four Miles to the outmoſt Parts of the *Suburbs*, to give Inſtruction and Encouragement to a new-planted *Society*; returning again a conſiderable time after Night, in all the Inconveniencies of the Darkneſs and uncertain Weather, with the chearing Thought of having been well imployed.

I muſt alſo further note, to the Praiſe and Glory of *Almighty God*, by what remarkable *Providences* it hath pleaſed him to further this Divine Work: For the Converſions of ſome of thoſe *Young Men* who have been very inſtrumental in this Affair, have been very wonderful.

ONE of them had ſuch an affecting Dream of the *Day of Judgment*, that

that he forthwith became a very zealous Servant of God; and was so sensible of the importance of securing Peace with God, and redeeming Time, that for several Years together he spent the greatest part of the Night in Prayer and Pious Exercises, as his Chamber-fellow informs me. He also begged leave of his Master to retire a little while to his *Devotions* at Noon, and to have Liberty to partake of the benefit of some publick *Sermons* and *Prayers*, promising to give him Satisfaction for it when he came out of his Time; which accordingly he did, tho it does not speak the Piety or *Charity* of his Master, who required it of him.

ANOTHER of them (tho in perfect Health) could not rest in his Bed for several Nights together, which at last brought him upon his Knees to ask it of God, with some Sorrow for his Sins, (for he had lived a very ill Life) and he found such ease to his Mind thereby, that it presently conduced to his bodily Rest; which led him to the

the further Exerciſe of it, eſpecially before he went to Bed. And then taking ſome Delight in the Duty, he frequented the *Evening Prayers* ſet up at eight of the Clock by theſe *Societies*; where he obſerved the affectionate Devotions of theſe *aſſociated Young Men*; and after Prayers, made his Condition known to ſome of them, who mightily aſſiſted him in the Ways of God, till he became a frequent Communicant.

ANOTHER of them was told by an idle prating Woman, that ſhe was perſwaded he would not live long, which ſhe grounded upon a moſt impertinent Obſervation, not worthy to be mentioned. But this jeſting Talk awakened him in good earneſt to prepare to die; So *powerful is a trivial Means in the Hands of the Almighty God:* Whereupon he ſpent the greateſt part of the following Night in Prayer, with earneſt *Vows* and *Tears*; And he has lived a very devout and exemplary Life ever ſince, which is about nine Years.

MANY

MANY others have, in my hearing, praiſed God that ever they were acquainted with theſe *Chriſtian Aſſociates:* And have owned, that their Knowledg of God, and Converſion to him, were occaſioned thereby; yea, I never yet met with one Member of any of theſe *Societies*, who did not greatly praiſe God for the Benefit they reap from them.

AND ſince the time that the Uſefulneſs of theſe *Societies* has been viſible to the World, their Zeal hath provoked ſome of their *Diſſenting Brethren* to join with them occaſionally, and to ſet up the like among themſelves. And who knows but that this *Eſſential Union* of theirs in the Love of God and Goodneſs, may at laſt draw them to center in the ſame *Communion*; and ſo bring a moſt ineſtimable Bleſſing to this *bleeding Church and State?* Than which no Bleſſing upon Earth can be imagined greater. For, it would mightily ſtrengthen the languiſhing Intereſt of *Proteſtancy*; and

and envigorate the Power of our *Holy Religion*; and be the beſt and ſureſt Foundation of a vigorous and general *Reformation*. And this, in a time when both *Union* and *Reformation* are almoſt deſpair'd of. And if once the *Holy Spirit* of God vouchſafes us theſe his Heavenly Fruits of *Unity* and *Purity*, *England* will indeed be *the Glory of all Nations*.

IN fine, we have here many hundreds of young, ſober, and active Men, freely and ſolemnly engaging themſelves to live ſtrictly as it becometh our *Holy Religion*, (the Honour of which is at this Day deplorably ſunk) and humbly offering their utmoſt Service to our *Magiſtrates* and *Miniſters*, in order to ſuppreſs the publick Practice of thoſe *ſcandalous and inſolent Sins* which endanger both our *Church and State*. And there ſeems to be a zealous and generous Spirit in them animating them to this *noble Enterprize*: And they are put into an excellent Method to carry it on

on in all the parts of the City, of which they have already given sufficient proof. And truly, if these Means of *Reformation* be not accepted, it will be difficult to find out any other that are so like to effect it, or to *better the next Generation, in which all our Hope of Prosperity on Earth seems to lie.* So then, if it shall please Persons in *Place and Power* to improve this *Talent* laid before them, by strengthning those Hands which are heartily stretcht forth against Profaneness, but need their Assistance to effect it: What eminent Service may be done *for God and these Kingdoms* in this Season? But if this Design be mockt and brow-beaten, (as many things proposed for the *Publick Good*, and this in particular hath been) and if some vain People give it a *Nickname*, and term it an *imprudent or unseasonable Zeal*, or the like, and then the rest decry and discourage it, or at least are ashamed to own it, or appear for it; I am perswaded, That notwithstanding

ſtanding the common Cry of *Peace, Peace*, it will be hard to aſſign good Proof, *that we are not near to Deſolation.*

CHAP. V.

A Specimen of the Orders *of the* Societies *before mentioned.*

I.

1 Pet. 1. 15. THAT the ſole *Deſign* of this *Society* being to promote real Holineſs of Heart and Life: It is abſolutely neceſſary that the Perſons who Joſh. 24. 15. enter into it, do ſeriouſly reſolve to apply themſelves in good earneſt to all means pro- 2 Tim. 3. 15. per to *make them wiſe unto Salvation.*

II.

II.

THAT in order to their being of *one Heart and one Mind* in this Design, every Member of this *Society* shall own and manifest himself to be of the *Church of England*, and frequent the *Liturgy*, and other publick Holy Exercises of the same. And that they be careful withal to express due Christian *Charity*, *Candor* and *Moderation* towards all such Dissenters as are of good Conversation.

Rom. 15. 5, 6. Phil. 2. 2. 1 Pet. 2. 13. Eph. 4. 2. Rom. 12. 18.

III.

THAT the Members of this *Society* shall meet together one Evening in the Week at a convenient Place, in order to encourage each other in *practical Holiness*, by discoursing on Spiritual Subjects, and reading God's Holy Word; and to pray to *Almighty God*, and praise his Name together.

1 Thess. 5. 14. Rom. 14. 19. Psal. 34. 3.

AND to this Assembly any serious Person may be admitted, upon Request.

IV.

THAT at such *Meetings*, there be no hot Disputes about Controversial Points, State-Affairs, or the Concerns of Trade and worldly Things: But that the whole Bent of the Discourse be to *glorify God, and edify one another in Love.*

Rom. 15. 6.

Eph. 4. 16.

V.

THAT it be left to every Person's Discretion to contribute at every *Weekly Meeting*, what he thinks fit towards a *Publick Stock* for Pious and Charitable Uses: And the Money thus collected shall be kept by the two *Stewards* of the *Society*, (who shall be chosen by majority of Voices once a Year or oftner) to be disposed of by the Consent of

1 Cor. 16. 2.

of the major part of the *Society*, for the Uſes abovementioned. And the ſaid *Stewards* ſhall keep a faithful *Regiſter* of what is thus collected and diſtributed, to be peruſed by any Member of the *Society*, at his Requeſt.

VI.

THAT any reſpective Member may recommend any Object of Charity to the *Stewards*, who ſhall (with the Conſent of the reſt) give out of the *Common Stock*, according as the Occaſion requires. And in a Caſe of extraordinary Neceſſity, every particular Perſon ſhall be deſired to contribute further, as they ſhall think fit.

VII.

THAT every one that abſents himſelf four Meetings together, (without giving a ſatisfactory Account to the

Stewards) ſhall be lookt upon as diſaffected to the *Society*.

VIII.

THAT none ſhall be admitted into this *Society*, without giving due notice thereof to the *Stewards*, who ſhall acquaint the whole *Society* therewith. And after due enquiry into their Religious *Purpoſes*, and *manner of Life*, the Stewards may *admit* them to ſubſcribe their Names, if the major part of the Society allows of it, and not otherwiſe. And with the like joint Conſent, they may *exclude* any Member proved guilty of any Miſbehaviour after due Admonition, unleſs he gives ſufficient Teſtimony of his Repentance and Amendment, before the whole *Society*.

IX.

IT is hereby recommended to every Perſon concerned in this

this *Society*, to conſider the many Inconveniencies, (and many times Sins) which attend *Ale-Houſe-Games*, and wholly decline them. And to ſhun all unneceſſary reſort to ſuch Houſes and Taverns, and wholly to avoid lewd *Play-Houſes*. Gal. 5. 13. 1 Theſſ. 5. 22.

X.

THAT the reſpective Members of this *Society*, ſhall heartily endeavour, through God's Grace;

1. TO be *juſt* in all their Dealings, even to an exemplary Strictneſs. 1 Theſſ. 4. 6.

2. TO *pray* many times every Day: Remembring our continual dependence upon God, both for Spiritual and Temporal Things. 1 Theſſ. 5. 17.

3. To partake of the *Lord's Supper* at leaſt once a Month, if not prevented by a reaſonable Impediment. 1 Cor. 11. 26. Luke 22. 19.

Mat. 11. 29. 4. TO practise the *profoundest Meekness and Humility.*

Mat. 7. 1. 5. TO watch against *censuring* others.

Psal. 139. 23. 6. TO accustom themselves to *holy Thoughts* in all places.

1 Cor. 12. 25. 7. TO be helpful one to another.

Tit. 3. 2. 8. To exercise Tenderness, Patience, and Compassion towards all Men.

1 Cor. 10. 11. 9. TO make Reflections on themselves when they read the *Holy Bible*, or other good *Books*, and when they hear Sermons.

1 Thess. 5. 22. 10. TO shun all foreseen *Occasions* of *Evil:* As evil Company, known Temptations, *&c.*

Luke 16. 25. 11. TO think often on the different Estates of the *Glorified* and the *Damned* in the *unchangeable Eternity*, to which we are hastening.

2 Cor. 13. 5. 12. TO *examine* themselves every Night, what *Good* or *Evil* they have done in the Day past. 13. TO

13. TO keep a *private Fast* once a Month, (especially near their approach to the *Lord's Table*) if at their own disposal; or to fast from some Meals when they may conveniently. Mat. 6. 16. Luke 5. 35.

14. TO mortify the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts. Gal. 5. 19, 24.

15. TO advance in *heavenly-mindedness*, and in all *Grace*. 1 Pet. 3. 8.

16. To shun *Spiritual Pride*, and the Effects of it, as Railing, Anger, Peevishness, and Impatience of Contradiction, and the like.

17. TO pray for the *whole Society* in their private Prayers. Jam. 5. 16.

18. TO read pious Books often for their Edification, but especially the *Holy Bible*: And herein particularly, Joh. 5. 39.

Mat. 5, 6, 7, Chap. *Luke* 15, 16, Chap. *Rom.* 12, 13, Chap. *Eph.* 5, 6, Chap. 1 *Thes.* 5, Chap. *Rev.* 1, 2, 3, 21, 22, Chapters.

And in the *Old Testament*, *Levit.* 26, Chap. *Deut.* 28, Chap. *Isa.* 53, Chap. *Ezek.* 36, Chap.

19. TO be continually mindful of the great Obligation of this *Special Profession of Religion*; and to walk so circumspectly, that none may be offended or discouraged from it by what they see in them; nor occasion given to any to speak reproachfully of it.

20. TO shun all manner of Affectation and Moroseness; and be of a civil and obliging Deportment to all Men.

XI.

THAT they often consider (with an awful dread of God's Wrath) the sad *Height* to which the Sins of many are advanced in this our Nation; and the bleeding *Divisions* thereof in *Church* and *State*. And that every Member be ready

Mal. 3. 16.

Judg. 5. 15.

ready to do, what upon conſulting with each other ſhall be thought adviſable, towards the puniſhment of *publick Profaneneſs*, according to the good Laws of our Land, required to be put in Execution by the *King*'s and the late *Queen*'s ſpecial Order. Deut. 13. 8. Levit. 24. 11.

XII.

THAT each Member ſhall encourage the *Catechizing* of young and ignorant People in their reſpective Families, according to their Stations and Abilities: And ſhall obſerve all manner of Religious *Family-Duties*. Deut. 6. 7. Joſh. 24. 15.

XIII.

THAT the major Part of the *Society* ſhall have Power to make a new *Order* to bind the whole when need requires; if it be approved by a pious and learned *Miniſter* of the *Church of England*, nominated by the whole *Society*.

XIV.

THAT these *Orders* shall be read over at least four times in the Year by one of the *Stewards*; And that with such deliberation, that each Member may have time to examine himself by them, or to speak his Mind in any thing relating to them.

XV.

LASTLY, That ever Member of this *Society* shall (after mature deliberation, and due trial) subscribe his Name to these Orders; to express his *Approbation* of them, and his *Resolution* to endeavour to live up to them. In order to which, he shall constantly keep a Copy of *them by him.*

The End of the Orders.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The Reason of this Publication of the Orders and Design of these Societies.

HAVING found by discourse with several Persons (who have greatly rejoiced to hear of any *Publick Good* set on foot) that they never before heard of these *Societies*; I could not but wonder that a thing of this Nature could so long remain secret.

THEY have been erected in our *Capital City* above nineteen Years; They procure Sermons by way of preparation for the *Lord's Supper*, or to engage a suitable Holiness of Life after it, every *Lord's Day* about five in the Evening, in many of the largest Churches in the City: Their *Charity* is extended to deserving Objects in all the Parts of the *City* and *Suburbs*. And

by

by their Procurement, *Publick Prayers* are daily made in several Churches, at such Hours as they can most conveniently be present at them. And by the means of their great Zeal and giving Informations, a Multitude of such as have no fear of God before their Eyes, have been punish'd for their *Profaneness and Debauchery.*

SO that it is to be admired, that their good Deeds and Designs could be so long unknown to so many. But truly this does very much recommend their *Christian Modesty*, it demonstrates that they do not affect to publish either their *Alms* or *Devotion*, after the vaunting manner of the *Pharisees*, with which our *Blessed Saviour* was so highly offended; but that they desire to manage their Holy Purposes in the most *humble Silence* and *contrived Secrecy.*

I conceived therefore, that it might probably conduce to the enlargement of these useful *Societies*, and to engage the Prayers of good People in their behalf,

behalf, to give some Publick Account of their *Constitution, Design*, and *Orders*, all which have been approved by divers eminent Divines; and among them, by our late excellent Primate, *Arch-Bishop Tillotson*, who after he had examin'd their *Orders*, and the trifling Objections that were made against them by some Persons, declared it as his Opinion publickly, and upon several Occasions, That these *Societies* were a Support to our *Church*; and surely they will not be ashamed to appear in Publick, wheresoever the *Christian Religion* does.

AND tho there be some little variations in the *Orders* of some of these *Societies* from others, yet the Substance of them is generally one and the same: In which I beseech the *Holy Spirit* to establish every Soul engaged therein, and to incline others to be *followers of them in that which is Good.*

THAT

THAT we have abſolute need of *Reformation* from the Higheſt to the Loweſt, and that it highly concerns us to ſet about it with ſpeed, are Truths ſo manifeſt, that I need not ſtand to prove them to any Perſon of ſerious and ſober Thought. All ſuch muſt of neceſſity conclude with me, *That unleſs it be effected ſpeedily, we are undone.*

AND I think it will as little be queſtioned by ſober Men, but that theſe *Societies* do very directly tend towards that deſired Effect: However, ſince ſome *Objections* have been made againſt them, we will now take them into Conſideration.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The chief Objections which have been made against these Societies, considered and answered by some of their Members.

I.

WHEREAS it has been objected, That there is danger of *Schism and Dissension* by their weekly meeting, and conferring together about Religious Matters:

THEY answer, 1. That they cannot conceive where this Danger lies; since no Persons do more professedly own the Holy Doctrine and Constitution of the *Church of England* than themselves, desiring always to be found in their Practice agreeable thereunto: And that none do more sincerely reverence and esteem the *Publick Ministry*,

Ministry, nor more constantly and reverently attend upon the *Publick Ordinances*: In the great Esteem of which (in subordination to the Glory of God, and their own and others Salvation) they have at their own Expence set up daily *Publick Prayers* in many Churches, (after due leave obtained) and have procured (thro the Assistance of several Pious Divines) the Benefit of *weekly Communions* in many Churches, which they frequent in great Numbers.

2. THAT some of their Members had by their Examples influenced several *Dissenters* to come to Church, and been a means of bringing several *Anabaptists and Quakers* to Baptism. That they had also been instrumental of preserving from *Popery* several unsteddy and wavering People, in the late Rage of that *Spiritual Plague*, and of reducing many licentious Persons to Holiness of Life.

3. THAT as all controversial Points are forbidden by their *Orders* to

to be medled with in their Conferences, (becauſe they only deſign to promote practical Holineſs by their aſſembling together) ſo in their reading of thoſe practical Portions of *Holy Scripture* to which their *Orders* direct them, they have recourſe to Dr. *Hammond*'s Expoſition, or ſome other Author recommended by their Miniſters.

4. THAT it had in Fact been verified for theſe twenty Years paſt, that but one Member of theſe *Societies* had (to the beſt of their knowledg) left the Communion of the *Church of England* for any other; of which ſingular Defection ſome ſpecial Reaſons may be given.

LASTLY, That leaving Matters of Fact, they did appeal to the Sentiments of all good People; whether their reading of the Word of God, with the moſt Orthodox Expoſitors; their Praying and ſinging Pſalms together, with their Exhorting, Reproving, and encouraging one another in their Spiritual Warfare, have any tendency

tendency in Reason, and in the Nature of things to make Schismaticks? Or rather, whether any *Church of Christ* will not most certainly be the more established and advanced by the conscientious and general Practice of such Holy Exercises?

II. WHEREAS others have objected, that ill and designing Men may get into these *Societies* (as *Popish Emissaries have into some others*) and quite pervert their Design, (how good soever in the first Institution) to the prejudice of the *Church*:

THEY answer, 1. That their *Orders* forbid the admittance of any Person into their *Societies* (as Members) who is not known to some of the rest, and who does not frequent the *Publick Ordinances* in that way of Ministration which is by Law established: Which is a Caution they use to prevent Differences and Disorders and effectually excludes such as are mentioned by the *Objector*.

2. THAT

2. THAT they are so manifestly studious to comply with the Rules of the *Church of England*, and to yield a just *Obedience to those that are set over them in the Lord*; that they have been many times censured as guilty of rigid Severity, and Uncharitableness towards *Dissenting Protestants*; which they must likewise account an injurious Treatment; Forasmuch as they endeavour to shun all extreams, being desirous to practise *Christian Subjection* without prejudice to *Christian Charity*.

III. TO those who *object*, That by their Reproving and Admonishing those they converse with; and by their visiting the Sick, and sometimes praying with them; they do invade and intrude upon the *Ministers Office*:

THEY reply, 1. That since they are commanded of God, *in any wise to reprove their Brother, and not to suffer Sin upon him*; And to *exhort one another daily, lest any be hardened by the deceitfulness of Sin*; They humbly conceive,

ceive, that their Christian *Admonitions* and *Reproofs* can by no good Person be censured as an intrusion upon the *Ministerial Function*.

2. THAT since the Duty of *visiting the Sick, and administring to them* is one of the great things which will be enquired into by their *Lord* and *Saviour* at the last Judgment: And since all People are commanded *to pray one for another*; they cannot account it an invasion upon the *Minister's Office*, if at such time as the Minister cannot be present, they use an approved Form of Prayer sutable to the Condition of the Sick Person (which they humbly conceive any *Christian Friend* may and ought upon Request to do for another, who by Sickness is disabled from doing it himself) and in any case or manner but this, they do not practise it.

IV. TO such as suggest, that there is Danger of *Spiritual Pride* in these Societies, by their making a particular and special Profession of Religion and

nd being thought *more Holy than o-*
ers: They reply,

1. THAT they cannot think it
arrantable to omit any part of
hristian Duty for fear of *Spiritual*
ride, or seeming holier than others:
nce then, for the ſame Reaſon they
ight omit the whole.

2. THAT it is indeed a due Senſe
f their own and others *Infirmities*
hich induces them to unite into *So-*
ties (ſince *two are ſtronger than one*,
any than few), knowing that the
fficulties are very many, and very
eat, which they muſt encounter in
eir Paſſage towards *Eternal Life:*
nd that ſuch is the Degeneracy, even
Chriſtians in theſe latter days, that
rough the *Profaneneſs* of ſome, and
Lukewarmneſs and Cowardice of o-
ers, they ſhould but ſeldom meet
ith ſuch Converſation as is highly
edient for the keeping up a due
umth and Life in Spiritual Things;
ere it not for thoſe frequent Con-
nces, and pious Exerciſes which

are

are (with good Effect) set up by their *Societies.*

V. WHEREAS it is *objected*, That since a Church of *Christ* is a *Society of Christian People*; and that these Societies are erected in a *Reformed Church*: That this is a Society within a Society, and a Refining upon a *Reformed Church.*

TO this they humbly reply;

1. THAT they have not yet learnt, that the reading of *God's Word*, and conferring on the practical Points of *Religion*, in order to a more holy Conversation, hath at any time by good Men been thought prejudicial to the *Church of Christ.* On the contrary; Our best *Divines* recommend these things both from the Pulpit and the Press, as the best Expedients to support and adorn our *Reformed Church*, and render it worthy of that *Venerable Name.*

2. THAT they do not well understand what the Objector means by *refining upon our Reformed Church*

If it be meant, that they pretend to reform her *Doctrine*, or quarrel with her *Government*; they utterly disclaim any such practice. But if it be meant, that they desire to *refine and reform* themselves and others, so as to come nearer to her *Purity of Doctrine* in their practice, than some others do, who shelter their *profane Lives* under the pretence of her *Holy Communion*: They own this, and must adhere to it, not doubting but they shall have the Prayers of all good People, that they may so do.

UPON the whole Matter therefore, they conclude; That since their *Societies* are neither against the Word of God, nor the Laws of Man; but manifestly conducive to God's Glory, the Salvation of Men, and the publick Interest of our *Church* and *Nation*. And since they have proved very beneficial to the Souls of the Members, and are agreeable to the Primitive Practice of the *best Christians*, and tend so directly to revive some-

ſomething of their Primitive Purity and Zeal for Religion; together with their Charity, and good Works: They humbly crave, That theſe *Societies* may be encouraged by their *Governours in Church and State*, ſutably to the *Spiritual and National* Benefits which may be reapt from them.

CHAP. VIII.

An Admonition to the Members of theſe Societies.

HAVING thus far deſcribed and vindicated theſe *Societies*, which I verily think for the moſt part ſincerely *Religious*: I now turn me to the reſpective Members of them, beſeeching them, even for the Honour of *God* and *Goodneſs*, that they deport themſelves ſo, that a ſincere Lover of *Religion* may with Honour plead for them.

LET

LET me earneſtly entreat you, *my moſt beloved Brethren*, that ye walk worthy of your ſpecial Profeſſion of *Religion*, and of your pious Undertakings, which are honourable in the ſight of God, and Angels, and Men.

IT will be expected from you, that ye ſhew your ſelves exemplary in all the practical Points of our Holy Religion, ſuch as *Purity*, *Patience*, *Humility*, *Temperance*, *Charity*, *Heavenly-mindneſs*, and the like: becauſe this is the very End of your *Religious Aſſociations*. O! be not wanting to gain your *main Point*: For indeed, not only thoſe who diſreſpect you, but even thoſe that wiſh you beſt, will be apt to ask, *What do ye more than others?* Yea, as our *Great Lord and Maſter* has done more for you than for many others, he will (as a Righteous Judg) put that very Queſtion to you at the laſt Day, as we find it proceeding from his own Lips, *Mat.* 5. 47.

ALL the *real Disciples* of Christ do abundantly more for their Master than *Publicans*, and the unregenerate Part of the World. They have *much forgiven* them by God, and they *love him much*. They have *received much*, and they make suitable *Improvements* and *Returns*. They are *born of God*, and they *live to him*. They have *Treasures in Heaven*, and their *Hearts are there*. So that if you are sincere in your Pretensions, you will live like that *peculiar People* who are chosen *to shew forth the Praises of him who hath called you out of Darkness into his marvelous Light*.

CONSIDER, *my Brethren*, God hath entrusted his *Honour* with you in a very special manner. And if you fall into Sin, your Defaults will wound the Repute of *Religion*, more than the Follies of many others. If you grow loose, or but remiss and luke-warm towards sacred Things, the Lovers of Sin will triumph,

not

not only over you, but over *Religion* it self.

I cannot therefore do you a more valuable Kindness, than to call upon you to keep strictly to your *Holy Purposes* and *Rules*, and to mind you to embrace them with a Vigour like that of your *first Love*. You have run well hitherto, you have born a faithful Testimony against all Impiety and Immorality; and God hath directed your Steps by his Grace and Wisdom, so that ye have not given occasion to the Enemies of Vertue to speak reproachfully of you, or of it. *O be not weary of well-doing; ye will reap speedily if ye faint not.* You have but a little while longer to bear the *Burden and Heat of the Day*; and your Master's Eye is upon you all the while ye labour in his Vineyard, and will *reward every one of you according to your Works.*

WHILST you keep firm to your *Religious Purposes*, you will be supported by the Prayers and Suffrages

of all good People; and the clearneſs of your own Conſciences will chear you in the moſt adverſe Circumſtances: and what's above all, the Power and Conſolation of the *Holy Ghoſt* will ſuſtain you in every Condition, and your End will be *glorious*. Whereas on the contrary, if you ſink and ſwerve from your good Beginnings, you will be the Grief of good People, the Scoff of the Wicked, the Contempt of the World, a Terror to your ſelves in all your ſerious Hours, eſpecially in the Days of Trouble, and of Sickneſs, and Death; and alas! ye will be for ever pierced by the moſt diſmal Regret, and Self-condemnation, and be the Sport of mocking Devils to all Eternity.

WHEREFORE, *my Brethren*, be *zealouſly affected always in good Matters; withdraw not your Hand from the Plough*; but contend earneſtly for that Crown of Righteouſneſs which is prepared for them that love God. Let the Glorious Kingdom of

our

our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* fill your Hearts and Minds; and then ye will pour a juſt Contempt upon the vain Things of this World, which invite, but cannot treat a rational Soul with tolerable Satisfaction. We are taught, by the Sacred Word of God, to expect *a Day, in which the Heavens will paſs away with a great Noiſe, and the Elements will melt with fervent Heat, and the Earth and all its Furniture be burnt up.* Then will the whole Scene of viſible Things be ſhifted; and *Heaven* and *Hell* will divide all the Inhabitants of the Earth. O Sirs! let us live as it becomes ſuch a Faith: Since *we expect ſuch Things*, let us convince the Infidel World, that our Hearts are indeed ſet upon them.

LET us often think, what a *Glory* it will be, to be embraced and owned by our Immortal and Illuſtrious King, the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; to be acknowledged as his approved *Servants*, to be embraced as his beloved

Friends, and to be glorified as his adopted *Brethren*; as thoſe *that have followed him in the Regeneration*. This is the Honour, the Glory, the Bliſs of Man. It is worthy of all the Care, and Sweat, and Sufferings that we can ſuſtain in the purſuit of it. And this is the great, the ſure, and the near Recompence of all the faithful *Followers of the Lamb*.

BE ſure therefore, *my Brethren*, that ye walk in his bleſſed Steps, particularly thoſe of his *Humility* and *Meekneſs*. If the Leaven of Pride be found in you, it will corrupt all your other doings, and render you and your Works hateful in the ſight of God. This Root of Bitterneſs is apt to take place in our Hearts; and ye can never be too careful to weed it out, nor too earneſt in exalting the ſweet and comely Grace of *Humility*. And if ye are *meek*, *gentle*, and *patient towards all Men*; ye will obtain many Triumphs over the Spirits of Men by your *ſubmiſſion*, which would

would be exasperated by *contempt*.

—IN a word, be as submissive as ye have been to *those that have the Rule over you*, particularly to *those who truly watch for your* Souls; walk in Love one to another, as more than common Brethren; keep up to Christian *Purity*, regular *Zeal*, fervent *Devotion*, and an unblameable *Conversation*; and then the Face of God will be towards you here, till at last it be opened to you in a rapturous Eternal Vision, through his *beloved Son*. *Amen, Amen.*

CHAP. IX.

Directions for Religious Conference, with PRAYERS for the use of Religious Societies, *and upon other Occasions.*

I PREMISE that it may be very expedient, and what would much promote the pious Design of these *Societies*; that an *Orthodox and Pious Minister* should be chosen by each Society, as the *Director* and *Visiter* of it; who may frequently be present at their Assemblies, to preserve Order, excite Zeal, and resolve Doubts.

THIS would obviate many Objections concerning them, and would greatly benefit, countenance, and recommend such Assemblies.

THIS *Director* may be chosen every Year (when the *Stewards* are) by

by Majority of Votes (no manner of Salary or Reward being to be allowed on this Account) and when he is preſent, it will be his proper place to pray with the *Society*.

THE Members of the *Society* are often to mind one another, to be very punctual to their Hour of Meeting; and to wave leſſer Occaſions that tend to divert them from coming to it. And when a competent Number of them are met; one of the *Stewards*, (if the *Director* be abſent) or any other Perſon deſired, may begin the Conference thus: All ſtanding up.

MY Brethren, we are commanded of God, that *our Communication be ſuch as tends to the edifying of one another; and ſuch as miniſters Grace to the Hearers*, Epheſ. 4. 29. And we find the Spirit of God commending the Education of *Timothy*, *That from a Child he had known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wiſe unto Salvation, through Faith which is in*

Jesus Christ, 2 Tim. 3. 15. Let us therefore endeavour at this time to *edify one another* in the things of God, with the greatest Humility of Mind, and the tendereſt Bowels of *Chriſtian Charity*. For indeed, *Wherewithal can a Young Man cleanſe his way, but by taking heed thereto according to the Word of God?* Pſal. 119. 9. And that it may pleaſe God to inſtruct our Minds therein at this time, and to direct our Hearts and Lives thereby: Let us now put up our Prayers to God, (who is the *Giver of all Grace*, and the Author of all Good) to accompliſh this Holy Work in every one of us, by his *Holy Spirit*, *for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt his Son our Saviour.*

Then the Steward *may devoutly repeat theſe three Collects: All kneeling.*

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our Doings with thy moſt gracious Favour, and further us with thy continual Help; that in all our Works begun, continued,

continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally by thy Mercy obtain everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[*All,* Amen.]

O Most Blessed Lord! who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our Learning; Grant, that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them; that by Patience and Comfort of thy Holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed Hope of everlasting Life, which thou hast given us in thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

O God! for as much as without Thee, we are not able to please thee; mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our Hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Then

Then all rising, and seating themselves in their Places, the Steward *may read one of the Chapters set down in the* tenth Order; *resting so long at the end of every Verse, that any one may have an Opportunity to make any serious Remark upon it. Or some part of an approved* Exposition *on the* Holy Scripture, *or on the* Catechism, *may be read. And in order to a more advised Conference upon the most important Duties of our Holy Religion; the* Steward *(in the Absence of the* Director) *may, at the close of every Weekly Assembly, propose one of the following* Subjects *to be discoursed upon at their next Conference,* viz.

1. THE Duty of Self-examination, required 2 *Cor.* 13. 5.

2. THE Duty of Self-abasement, and Self-renouncing, required *Mark* 8. 34.

3. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, *Mark* 16. 16.

4. Evangelical Repentance, 2 *Cor.* 7. 10.

5. Effectual Conversion to God, *Acts* 26. 18.

6. Trust in God, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17.

7. Mortification, *Rom.* 8. 13. *Gal.* 5. 24.

8. Humility, *Ephes.* 3. 2.

9. Christian Hope, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3.

10. Christian Charity, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1, &c.

{ Including the Love of God, *Mark* 12. 30.
{ And the Love of Men, *Ver.* 31.

11. Alms-deeds, *Mat.* 6. 1, 2, 3, 4.

12. Contentment, *Phil.* 4. 11.

13. Just-dealing, 1 *Thess.* 4. 6.

14. Government of the Tongue, *Matth.* 12. 36, 37.

15. Prayer and Praise, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1.

16. Chastity, *Matth.* 5. 27, 28.

17. Temperance, 1 *Cor.* 9. 25.

18. Patience, 1 *Pet.* 2. 20. 21, &c.
Meekness, *Tit.* 3. 2.

19. The

19. The Publick Worſhip of God, *Pſalm* 42. 2, 4.

20. Heavenly-mindneſs, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. And Contempt of the World, *Gal.* 6. 14.

21. Of Chriſtian Prudence, *Matth.* 10. 16.

22. Family-Duties, *Joſh.* 24. 15. Or Religious Houſe-hold Government, *Acts* 10. 2.

23. Subjection to Magiſtrates, *Titus* 3. 1.

24. Peace-making, *Mat.* 5. 9.

25. Of Reproof, *Lev.* 19. 17.

26. Sanctifying the Lord's Day, *Numb.* 15. 32, *&c.*

27. Growing in Grace, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18.

28. Improvement of Opportunities of Doing and Receiving Good, *Acts* 10. 38.

29. Duty of Parents and Children towards each other, *Epheſ.* 6. 1, 2, 3, 4.

30. Of the Husband and Wife, *Epheſ.* 5. 22, to the end.

31. Of Maſters and Servants, *Epheſ.* 6. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

32. Of

32. Of People to their Paſtors, *Heb.* 13. 17.

33. Of preparing for, and watching in the Performance of all Religious Exerciſes, *Heb.* 12. 28, 29.

34. The Duty of Chriſtians to Enemies, *Rom.* 12. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

35. Of endeavouring the Converſion and Salvation of others, 1 *Tim.* 2. 3, 4.

36. The Senſe of God's Omnipreſence, *Pſalm* 139.

37. Of reading the Holy Scriptures, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7, 8, 9. 2 *Tim.* 3. 16.

38. Of Meditation, 1 *Tim.* 4. 15.

39. Of Circumſpection, or Watchfulneſs, *Mat.* 24. 42, 43, *&c.*

40. Of Perſeverance, *Rev.* 2. 10. *Jude, ver.* 24.

THESE are Duties of the greateſt Importance, and are all ſuited to the Rules of theſe *Societies*. And I have kept to the number 40, that I might aſſign one diſtinct Subject of Diſcourſe for every *Weekly Conference*

in

in the Year, reſerving the Diſcourſe of 12 of them to be ſpent upon the Subject of the Lord's Supper, which every Member is obliged by the Orders of the Society to receive (where he may with Conveniency) twelve times in the Year.

THUS every Perſon knowing for a whole Week before, what will be the *Subject* of the Diſcourſe at the next Conference, may the better prepare for it by ſutable Reading, Meditation and Prayer.

AND thus the chiefeſt parts of *Chriſtian Duty* will be conſidered and gone thorow every Year, to the great Increaſe of Knowledg and Practice.

Note, THAT every Perſon is chiefly to bend his Diſcourſe to further the *Practice* of every Duty, and to promote Holineſs of Life.

AND it will be expedient, That no Perſon ſpeak above 3 or 4 Sentences, without a convenient Pauſe, to give room to others to ſpeak their Mind. And in caſe of Silence, he may proceed,

proceed, but with the ſame Caution.

AND at the time of Conference, one of the *Stewards* (in the abſence of the *Director*) may propoſe the following *Queſtions*, for the ſake of Method; and that every ones Diſcourſe may be the more directly practical, *viz.* when the Duty to be ſpoken to, is named, the Steward may ſay,

I. *Queſt.* Wherein conſiſts the *Nature* of this Duty?

II. *Queſt.* What *Directions* do you propoſe in order to make the Practice of it more ſure, and more eaſy?

III. What *Diſcouragements* do any of you find in the Practice of it?

IV. What *Motives* may encourage our Practice of this Duty, and our Perſeverance in it?

IF the time permits, ſuch Motives as theſe may be toucht upon, *viz.*

1. The *Authority* of God commanding.

2. The *Goodneſs* of God, promiſing both to aſſiſt and reward the Diligent.

3. The

3. The *Terribleness* of God's Threatnings, and the Examples of his Wrath sometimes seen upon Earth; and the dreadfulness of the *everlasting Vengeance* of an *Almighty God*, in the fierceness of his Wrath in the other World.

4. The *Excellency* of the Duty itself.

5. The *Examples* of Good Men, who have gone before us in the Ways of God.

6. The Blessed *Rest and Peace* of a good Conscience; and the previous Hell of a bad one.

THESE general Heads may be the Method of Discourse upon any Duty at the Weekly Conference.

THE Conference being ended, one of the Stewards may read some of the following Sentences, and the Admonition, to raise up and engage every Soul to *Faith and Fervency* in Prayer.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Directions ſuted to ſuch Religious Conference.

Sentences.

GOD *is greatly to be feared in the Aſſemblies of his Saints; and to be had in reverence by all that are about him.* Pſal. 89. 7.

GOD *is a righteous Judg, ſtrong and patient; and God is provoked every day.* Pſal. 7. 12.

GOD *will bring every Work into Judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Eccleſ. 12. 14.

HE *that hideth his Sins ſhall not proſper: but he that confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have Mercy.* Prov. 28. 13.

IF

1 Joh. 2. 1, 2. *IF any Man ſinneth, we have an Advocate with the Father* Jeſus Chriſt *the Righteous; and he is the Propitiation for our Sins.*

Pſal. 95. 6. *O come, let us worſhip, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.*

The Admonition before Prayer, to be read by the Steward, (in the Director's Abſence) if the time will permit.

MY Brethren, ſince our gracious God has promiſed to be preſent, *where two or three* Mat. 18. 20. *are gathered together in his Name:* Let us duly conſider what an awful thing it is to draw nigh unto God; even Luk. 12. 5. to him who is *able to ſave, and deſtroy us for ever:* To him who ſees our very Hearts and ſecret Thoughts, and who hat

ath ſtruck ſome Perſons dead
n the place, when they *fought* Lev. 10. 2.
im not in due order. As *Na-* 2 Sam. 6. 7.
ab and *Abihu*, *Uzzah*, *Co-* Numb. 16.
h, and many others. 35.
1 Sam. 6.
19.

BUT we have a perfect
nd acceptable High Prieſt,
he *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who Heb. 7. 25.
will perfect and preſent our
etitions to *his Father*, *and* John 20.
r Father, if we devoutly 17.
nd ſincerely ſerve him. And
hrough this *new and living* Heb. 10.
Way we may approach to the 19.
Throne of Grace with an *hum-*
le boldneſs. Wherefore let
s gird up the Loins of our
ind, and rouze up our
owſy Affections, and watch
er our deceitful Hearts. Jam. 1. 6.
t us pray in Faith, and in
harity, with Fervency and 1 Tim. 2.
umility; conſidering that 8.
r preſent and future Hap-
neſs depends upon our pre-
iling in Prayer. Let us

there-

therefore beseech God to assist
Rom. 8. 26. us in this great Duty with his *Holy Spirit*, and thereby to help our Infirmities; and that he would graciously accept our unworthy Persons and Performances through his Son *JESUS CHRIST*, whom he
Heb. 7. 25. hath ordained to be a *High Priest for ever, to make Intercession for us.* Amen.

Let us pray.

Then all devoutly kneeling, they may join in this Confession of Sin.

ALMIGHTY God! Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; Maker of all Things; Judg of all Men: We acknowledg and bewail our manifold Sins and Wickedness, which we from time to time most grievously have committed, in Thought, Word and Deed, against thy Divine Majesty; provoking most justly thy Wrath and Indignation against us. We do earnestly

neſtly deſire to repent, and to be heartily ſorry for theſe our Miſdoings: The remembrance of them is grievous to us, the burden of them is intolerable. Have Mercy upon us, have Mercy upon us, moſt Merciful Father! for thy Son our Lord Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, forgive us all that is paſt. And grant that we may ever hereafter, ſerve and pleaſe thee in newneſs of Life: To the Honour and Glory of thy Name, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

OUR Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come: Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily Bread: And forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us: And lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from Evil: For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Then

Then the Steward alone may ſay,

ALMIGHTY and Everlaſting God, who hateſt nothing that thou haſt made; and doſt forgive the Sins of all them that are penitent: Vouchſafe to create and make in us new and contrite Hearts, that we duly lamenting our Sins, and acknowledging our Wretchedneſs, may obtain of thee, the God of all Mercy, perfect Remiſſion and Forgiveneſs, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Here may follow the Collect for the Day: And ſuch other Collects in the Common-Prayer, as may be ſutable.

Then all riſing.

Stew. Glory be to the Father, *&c.*
All. *As it was in the,* &c.
Stew. Praiſe ye the Lord.
All. *The Lord's Name be praiſed.*

Then

Then the Steward may read the following Admonition to the Praiſe of God, before the ſinging of a Pſalm, if time will permit.

LET us conſider, my Brethren, what cauſe we have to praiſe God. He is the Author of our Being; the Fountain of our Mercies; the God of our Life and of our Salvation. O! praiſe the Infinite Goodneſs of God, *who made us little lower than the Angels* in the State of our Creation; yea, who hath ſhewn to us faln Men, more Compaſſion than to the faln Angels: for they are *reſerved in Everlaſting Chains of Darkneſs, to the Judgment of the Great Day*; whilſt we have the Offers of Eternal Redemption. And it pleaſes God to fit Men

Pſal. 100. 3.

Pſal. 8. 5.

Jude 6.

daily for his nearer Preſence
2 Cor. 5. 5. in the Work of Sanctification, whilſt Devils are wholly given up to their malicious perverſeneſs.

LET us conſider, That Man was made by God to be the Mouth of the Dumb Creatures in the Praiſes of their Creator: Man is to be
Pſal. 104. the *High Prieſt* of the lower Creation to offer up a Divine Service for the whole Congregation of Sublunary Beings.

LET us remember, That
Pſal. 57. 8. Man's *Tongue is his Glory*, a very wonderful and peculiar Gift of God to Men. Let us ſay therefore with the Holy
Pſal. 109. 30. *Pſalmiſt, I will greatly praiſe the Lord with my Mouth; yea, I will praiſe him among the Multitude.*

LET

LET us obſerve, with what chearfulneſs the very Birds tune their pleaſant Notes to the Praiſe of their Maker after their Capacity. *They have no Store-houſe nor Barn,* and know not where they ſhall find the next mouthful of Meat; yet how pleaſant are they! And how void of Murmurs or Sullenneſs. Mat. 6. 26.

FINALLY, Let us conſider, that by praiſing God now, we learn how to praiſe God in Heaven. This will be the Work and Happineſs of that State of Glory: Let us therefore join our ſincere Praiſes in the Church below to thoſe more perfect *Hallelujahs* of the Saints above. It is ſaid, *Rev.* 14. 3. *That none could learn their Song, but thoſe that were redeemed from the Earth.* From which we may Rev. 19. 1.

note, that true Holineſs is that which will fit us for the *Songs of Heaven.*

LET us therefore now ſtrain up our Affections to the higheſt pitch; and ſo ſing the Praiſes of God in Heart and Spirit, *Pſal.* 148. 2. that *Angels and Saints* may join with us now, and we with them for evermore. *Amen.*

Then a Pſalm may be ſung; all ſtanding up in this exalted part of Divine Worſhip.

Then may they repeat the Apoſtles Creed.

I *Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth: And in Jeſus Chriſt, his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt: Born of the* Virgin Mary: *Suffered under* Pontius Pilate; *was crucified, dead and buried: He de-*

descended into Hell: The third day he rose again from the dead: He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right Hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judg the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The Holy Catholick Church; The Communion of Saints, The Forgiveness of Sins, The Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting. Amen.

All. *Lord, we believe; help thou our Unbelief.*

Then all kneeling. After the Collect for Trinity Sunday, the Steward may proceed in Prayer for the Society, which may also be used in a private Family.

O Most Holy and Blessed God! The Creator, Governour and Judg of all; Who hatest Falshood and Hypocrisy, and wilt not receive the Prayer of feigned Lips; But hast

promiſed to ſhew Mercy to ſuch as turn unto thee by true Faith and Repentance: Vouchſafe, we pray thee, to create in us clean and upright Hearts, through an unfeigned Faith in thy Son our Saviour. To us indeed belongeth Shame and Confuſion of Face: We are not worthy to lift up our Eyes or Voice towards Heaven; Our Natures are depraved, and our Ways have been perverſe before thee. O! let not thy Wrath riſe againſt us, leſt we be conſumed in a moment: But let thy merciful Bowels yern over us; and vouchſafe to purify and pardon us, through thine All-ſufficient Grace and Mercy in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Since it hath pleaſed thee to offer him up as a Sacrifice for Sinners, vouchſafe we beſeech thee to cleanſe us from all Iniquity through his Blood. We believe that he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt thoſe that come to thee by him; and we do earneſtly deſire to

embrace

embrace him as our Prince and Saviour: O! give us Repentance and Remiſſion of Sin through his Name. All we like Sheep have gone aſtray, every one in his own way: Good Lord, reduce us into thy Fold through this great Shepherd of Souls; and be pleaſed to lay on him the Iniquity of us all.

AND as we have much to be forgiven, be pleaſed to incline our Hearts to love thee much, who forgiveſt Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion and Sin. Give us that Faith which worketh by Love, and ſuch Love as will conſtrain us to have regard to all thy Commandments. And make us to look carefully to all our ways, that we may never again do any thing whereby thy Holy Name may be blaſphemed, or thine Authority deſpiſed.

GIVE us the deepeſt Humility, without which we can never be accepted of thee our infinitely conde-

ſcending God: Make us continually to tread in the Steps of our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour; being of a meek and quiet Spirit, always influenced by the higheſt Love of thee our God, and by the moſt charitable Diſpoſitions towards all Men.

VOUCHSAFE to indue us with the ſaving Knowledg of Spiritual things, that we may receive all thy Truths in the love of them, in all Patience, Purity, Juſtice, Temperance, Godlineſs, and Brotherly-Kindneſs; that we may adorn our Holy Profeſſion, and reſemble the Divine Goodneſs of thee our Heavenly Father.

AND ſince we are not only weak and frail, but corrupt and ſinful; vouchſafe, O Lord, to keep us by the Power of thine Holy Spirit, that we fall not from our avowed Stedfaſtneſs in all Chriſtian Duty. Preſerve us from all the Sin and Vanity to which our Age, Condition, and Nature

Nature is prone, and to which the Devil and this World may at any time tempt us.

GLORIFY, Good God, thy Strength in our Weakneſs, thy Grace in our Pollution, and thy Mercy in our Salvation. May our Holy Religion be grounded and ſettled in our Hearts; that out of the good Treaſure of a gracious Heart, our Speech may be ſavoury, and our Converſation exemplary; and that we may be fruitful in all good Works even to our old Age, and to our laſt day.

FIT us we pray thee for every ſtate of Life into which thy Providence ſhall caſt us; proſper our lawful Undertakings, preſerve us Night and Day; and prepare us for a hopeful Death, and a Bleſſed Eternity.

BE pleaſed, we beſeech thee, to bleſs all thoſe *Societies*, who in truth apply their Hearts to thy Service and Glory; we pray thee be pleaſ-

ed to ſtrengthen, ſtabliſh, and ſettle both them and us in thy Faith, Fear, and Love.

LET nothing in this World diſcourage us from the purſuit of thoſe Holy Purpoſes, which thy Spirit has at any time put into our Hearts and Minds. But make us all faithful to thee our avowed God, and our deſired Portion, even unto death; that we at laſt (with thy whole Church) may be partakers of that eternal Life and perfect Bliſs, which thou haſt promiſed, through Jeſus Chriſt, thy only begotten Son, our only Mediator and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A General Interceſſion.

ALMIGHTY God, whoſe Kingdom and Power is univerſal; Vouchſafe we pray thee to defend and proſper thy whole Church; and ſo diſpoſe the Heart of thy Servant *King William*, that he may ever ſeek thy Honour and Glory. And grant to his whole Council, and to all in Authority under him, that they may truly and indifferently miniſter Juſtice to the ſuppreſſing of thoſe Vices which reign amongſt us, and to the reviving of true Religion and Concord. And grant that all our Biſhops and Inferior Paſtors may be effectually illuminated by the Knowledg of thy Word, that by their Holy Lives, and Sound Doctrine, they may convert many to Righteouſneſs.

AND

AND to all the People of theſe three Nations be pleaſed to give thy Heavenly Grace, that they may live in thy Faith and Fear, in Obedience to Authority, and in godly Love towards each other.

FINALLY, we commend to thy fatherly Goodneſs all thoſe that are afflicted in Mind, Body or Eſtate, eſpecially ſuch as ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake. O Lord, relieve them according to their ſeveral Neceſſities, give them patience under their Sufferings, and a happy Iſſue out of all their Afflictions; all which we beg in the Name and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour. *Amen.*

A Thankſgiving.

O MOST merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the inexhauſtible Fountain of Goodneſs, we humbly praiſe thy Name for all thy Mercies vouchſafed to us. We praiſe thee, that thou madeſt us reaſonable Creatures; that we were born in a Chriſtian Land; and that we were early brought into thy gracious Covenant. We bleſs thee for all the Advantages of our Education; for all the Benefits of good Examples, and of ſeaſonable Counſel and Reproof: For all the Comfort we have had in any Relation, Friend or Enjoyment, and for the comfortable Uſe of all thy good Creatures.

WE praiſe thee for all the Benefits of Affliction; for thy merciful Support in Trouble, and thy gracious Deliver-

Deliverances from any Evil.

WE bleſs thy Name for our preſent Health, for our neceſſary Food, for our peaceable Habitations, and for that meaſure of outward things which thy Bounty hath diſpenſed to us.

BUT above all, we bleſs and praiſe thy Name now (and deſire to magnify thy Name for ever) for our Redemption by the Blood of thy Beloved Son; and that thou haſt ordained Means of eternal Life thrô him.

WE praiſe thee for thy Covenant of Life and Peace; for thy Word and Sacraments; for the Operations of thine Holy Spirit, and for any Evidence or Hope of thy Favour towards us, who are leſs than the leaſt of thy Mercies.

WE bleſs thee, Good God, for thy Patience towards us, for thy Calls to us, and for thy great Pity and Compaſſion to ſuch unworthy Creatures.

SET

SET home, we beſeech thee, a due and conſtant Senſe of theſe and all thy Mercies upon all our Hearts, and make us to live to the Praiſe of thee (the God of our Mercies) all our Days, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, to whom with thee, and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Bleſſing, Honour, Glory and Power aſcrib'd by Angels and Men for evermore. *Amen.*

Then all ſtanding up, The following Exhortation to Humility may be read.

MY Brethren, ſince the Great God doth often aſſure us in his Holy Word, That *he will reſiſt the Proud, but give Grace to the Humble*: James 4.6. 1 Pet. 5.5. Let us conſider, that our Undertakings, tho never ſo good, will fail and come to nought, except we be *truly and deeply Humble*. Luk. 14.11. Indeed it cannot be other-

otherwiſe, becauſe the proud Perſon quits his Reliance on God, to reſt in himſelf, which is to exchange a *Rock* for a *Reed*.

ALAS! what are we, poor empty *Nothings!* yea, what is worſe, condemned periſhing *Sinners?* We have perhaps Underſtanding now, but God can ſoon turn it into Madneſs: We may have ſome Attainments in Grace, but ſpiritual Pride will wither all, and ſoon reduce us to a very profligate and wretched State; ſuch as we have ſeen others tumble into, who have begun in the *Spirit*, and ended in the *Fleſh*. *What have we that we have not received?* And which he that gave it, may not as ſoon take away?

Gen. 32. 10.

Dan. 4. 42.

Iſa. 66. 2.

1 Cor. 4. 7.

WE that are young in Years, and younger in Grace, are

1 Tim. 3. 6.

are in danger of Self-conceit, and of being puffed up; which is a Quick-ſand in which thouſands have been ſwallowed up and periſht. It is not in vain, that the Apoſtle requires, *That young men be exhorted to be ſober-minded*, Tit. 2. 6. which he elſewhere explains, when he ſays, *Let no Man think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think, but to think ſoberly*, Rom. 12. 3.

Prov. 16. 18. Iſa. 14. 12, 13.

BY Pride the Angels fell from Heaven: and if ever we climb up to thoſe bleſſed Seats from which they are faln, it muſt be by the gracious ſteps of Humility and Lowlineſs of Mind. *Wherefore let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall. Let us walk humbly with our God*, and with all Men; and ever have lowly Thoughts of our vile ſelves, and

1 Tim. 3. 6. Luke 18. 14. 1 Cor. 10. 12. Rom. 11. 20.

and of our poor Attainments; and of our defective Performances: And with St. *Paul*, 2 Cor. 12. 11. (*who was in nothing behind the very chiefeſt Apoſtles*) let us always ſay, I am Nothing.

LET us therefore now ſing to the Praiſe of God, to whom alone Praiſe is due.

Here ſing a Pſalm: After which the Steward *may ſay*;

IT is very meet and right, and our bounden Duty, that we ſhould at all times, and in all Places, give thanks unto thee, O moſt bleſſed and bountiful God, in whoſe Hands our Breath is, and from whom cometh our Salvation.

All. Therefore with Angels and Arch-Angels, and with all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name, evermore praiſing thee, and ſaying, Holy, Holy,

ly, Holy, Lord God of Hoſts! Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory. Glory be to thee O Lord moſt High. *Amen.*

Stew. May the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Love of God, and the Fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

CHAP. X.

Prayers for Families, for Seamen, and for young Perſons.

AT the Requeſt of ſome under my Miniſtry, the following *Prayers* are added.

And let it be noted, That the foregoing Forms of Prayer and Praiſe may be properly uſed in *Private Families.* And the Prefaces to both may be uſefully read in Families now and then, to excite zealous Affecti-

ons,

ons, and an awful dread of God in our Approaches to him.

AND to the end, that the daily Worſhip of God may be ſet and kept up in every Family; let it never be forgotten, that the Spirit of God has denounced a moſt dreadful Curſe upon all prayerleſs Families: Jer. 10. 25. *Pour out thy Fury upon the Heathen that know thee not, and upon the Families that call not upon thy Name.*

AND, as I have often in my Sermons, ſo I here again ſolemnly charge thoſe that own my Miniſtry, even in the Preſence, and by the Authority of the Almighty God, that they pull not this denounced Curſe upon themſelves and Families. And I again mind them to read the Word of God daily, and to *Catechize* their Children and Servants in a ſerious and effectual manner: and that they *Remember the Lord's Day to keep it Holy*, even the whole Day;

Day; and that they ſuffer not their Children or Servants to pollute any part of it, or trifle it away by unneceſſary worldly Buſineſs, or vain Diſcourſe or Diverſion.

Theſe things are neceſſary to your Peace with God, and your dying in Hope.

A Prayer for a Family in the Morning.

O MOST Holy and Bleſſed God! who filleſt all Places with thy Preſence, and art a ſearcher of all Hearts; with thee is terrible Majeſty to confound thine Enemies, but infinite Mercy to ſuccour the humble and contrite Soul: we pray thee meet us not at this time in thy juſt Vengeance as a conſuming Fire; but be pleaſed to accept us graciouſly through thy Mercy in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is our Hope. WE

WE have indeed lived too long as without God in the World; we have wickedly followed our own corrupt Desires and Devices; and have not duely owned thy Soveraignty and Dominion over us. We have broken our Vows, and stifled our Consciences, and exceedingly defiled our selves, and offended thee, setting at nought the Promises and Threatnings of thy Book, and hating to be reformed. Lord, we lament our Impenitency, and Unbelief, and all the sinful Fruits of our filthy and ungodly Hearts, Lips, and Lives. And we earnestly beseech thee, that thou wouldst not give us up to our own filthiness, and folly, and hardness of Heart: But that thou wouldst graciously reduce us into thy Fold and Favour, by the Power of thine Holy Spirit; and to accept and pardon us through the Merit of our Lord Jesus Christ.

AND,

AND, O Lord, vouchſafe to cleanſe and ſanctify us in Soul and Body; and make us to glorify thy Name on Earth, and to do the Work thou haſt given us to do. Be pleaſed to ſubdue our Corruptions, and to mortify every inordinate Affection and unruly Paſſion; and make us entirely reſigned to thy Will, and ſubſervient to thy Praiſe, now and ever.

KEEP us, we beſeech thee, from the Snares of worldly Pleaſures and Enjoyments, and make us to ſet our Hearts on things above: And bring all the Powers of our Souls and Bodies into a willing ſubjection to thy Rule and Government. And ſave us from all carnal Ignorance and Unbelief, and from all Ungodlineſs, and ſinful Indulgence of the Fleſh.

VOUCHSAFE, Good God, to pity our Weakneſs and Imperfection; and to ſuccour us in all our Temptations; and to ſupport us in all our Sorrows and Afflictions: and grant

us

us a happy end of all our Sorrows at laſt in thine eternal Kingdom.

MAKE us ever mindful of the End for which we were made; and the chief Work we have to do; and the uncertainty of this preſent Life: and affect us duly by the forethought of that unchangeable Eternity to which we are haſtening.

AND let thy Faith and Fear ever dwell in our Hearts; that it may be our continual Exerciſe to keep our Conſciences void of Offence both towards thee our God, and towards all Men.

SUFFER us not to ſpend the Day of our Salvation idely and unprofitably: But make us to work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling, through thy Grace and Spirit; and make us to ſtand always upon our Watch, prepared for our Maſter's Call: That whenſoever thou ſhalt put an end to this mortal Life, it may be the beginning of a Bleſſed Immortality.

VOUCH-

VOUCHSAFE, O Lord, to bleſs all our Governours in Church and State; and grant that they may be thy Miniſters to us for Good, and that we may never be guilty of any ſinful diſobedience towards them. And give to all the People of this Nation, thy Grace to live in Unity and Godly Love, and to further each others preſent and eternal Welfare.

BE pleaſed to bleſs all our Relations and Friends; and multiply thy Mercies upon them in the Bleſſings of this and of the other World: and vouchſafe to ſuccor all that lie under any Sorrow or Affliction, and be near unto them in all they call upon thee for.

MANIFEST thine eſpecial Love and Favour, we pray thee, to this Family: Vouchſafe to provide for us, and defend us by thy good Providence. Preſerve us from all Evil throughout this Day; proſper us in our lawful Affairs; let no variance nor

ill-will prevail amongſt us, but keep us in Peace and Chriſtian Love to our lives end.

FINALLY, We praiſe thy great and glorious Name, for all thy Mercies towards us: For the Reſt and Safety of the laſt Night; for the renewed Comforts of this preſent Day, and all the good Providences of our paſt Life.

MORE eſpecially for the means of Grace, the motions of thy Spirit, and for thy great Patience and Long-ſuffering towards us. But above all, for the Merits and Mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who ever liveth to make Interceſſion for us; for whoſe ſake we beſeech thee to hear us, accept us, and pardon us; together with theſe our unworthy Prayers; in whoſe moſt Holy Name and Words we further pray:

OUR

OUR *Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come: Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily Bread: And forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us: And lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from Evil: For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever.*

Amen.

A Prayer for a Family in the Evening.

O Eternal God! Infinite in all Perfection, and worthy of all Praiſe! who wilt be glorified in or upon every Creature which thou haſt made; It is meet, that with Fear and Trembling, we conſider thy holy and righteous Attributes, and our own polluted Natures and ſinful Lives.

O Lord! we have ſinfully forgotten thee our Creator in the days of our Youth; and vainly miſ-ſpent our precious time in Sin and Folly. Alas! with what diligence have we ſerv'd the Fleſh, and the Devil, and this preſent World! and how little have we minded the Concerns of our Salvation and eternal Life! We have not glorified thee the God that madeſt us, and in whoſe Hands our Breath is; but have lived as if we had been made only for this World, and to pleaſe our ſelves.

O! how juſtly mayeſt thou ſnatch away our Breath from us, ſince we have ſo much abuſed it in idle and ungodly Speeches; and call us ſpeedily into another World, ſince we have ſo preſumptuouſly built our Hopes of Happineſs in this! And ſhould this be thy Pleaſure and our Portion; O Lord, how could we appear before thee in the Guilt of thouſands of unpardoned Sins! or how

how could we endure to dwell with everlaſting Burnings!

BUT with thee, O Bleſſed God, there is Infinite Mercy and Plenteous Redemption. Thou ſo lovedſt the World, as to give thine only begotten Son, that whoſoever believes on him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life. Lord, we deſire to believe on him, help us we pray thee againſt our Unbelief. Enable us to ſubmit all the Powers of our Soul to him in his ſaving Offices; and grant that we may ſo believe on him, that we may obtain Eternal Life through his Name.

BE pleaſed to take away all Impurity and Hypocriſy, all inſenſibleneſs and perverſeneſs from us; and make us thy willing and obedient Servants for ever. We know that without Holineſs, none can enter into thy Kingdom: O Lord, make us Holy through the effectual Regeneration and Sanctification of thine Ho-

ly Spirit; that we may love thee with all our Heart and Soul, and ſerve thee with all our Might and Strength; and may delight to do thy Will, and to deny our ſelves for thy ſake.

AND ſince we have too long neglected that great Salvation, which was purchaſed for us by the Blood of thy Son; Awaken us, we pray thee, to improve the remaining ſpace of our Days with all poſſible Care, giving all diligence to make our Calling and Election ſure.

ENABLE us to break looſe from the Snares of this preſent World, and from all the ſinful Entanglements of the Fleſh, and from the Seducements of wicked and diſſolute Men; that we may run with ſpeed that Race which thou haſt ſet before us, and may perſevere in it to the Death, that we may in the end attain everlaſting Life.

TO

TO this end, make us habitually mindful of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of this Mortal Life, and the unprofitableneſs of all Earthly things in the Hour of Death, and in the other World. And make us now to chooſe thy Favour as our chiefeſt Good, thy Son as our Prince and Saviour, and thy Kingdom as our Portion. And when our Souls ſhall be ſummoned to leave this earthly Tabernacle, vouchſafe, Good God, to receive us into thoſe everlaſting Manſions which our Bleſſed Saviour has prepared for thoſe that love Him.

FOR whoſe ſake, we pray thee, bleſs theſe three Nations with Plenty, Peace, and Safety, and with the Increaſe of all that's Good: And ſend Peace and Truth amongſt all Nations.

BE pleaſed to bleſs and direct all that are ſet in Authority over us; And grant that they may govern

us, and we obey them, in the Fear of thee our God. Vouchsafe to succour all that are Objects of Misery, whether they labour under Spiritual or Temporal Afflictions: And be pleased to administer to them as their Necessities of Soul or Body require.

BE gracious to all our Relations and Friends, preserve them from all Evil, and bind up their Souls in the bundle of Life.

BE more particularly gracious, we pray thee, to this Family, and to every particular Person it. Be pleased to dwell with us, and rule over us: Preserve us in Peace and Safety; and let thy Spirit rule in every one of our Hearts, that we may faithfully discharge our respective Duties one to another, and may live in Christian Union, Purity, and Peace. Vouchsafe, O Thou that never slumberest nor sleepest! to grant us thy Protection this Night: Give thine

Holy

Holy Angels charge concerning us: Preſerve us from danger by Fire, and Tempeſt; and from the Violence of unreaſonable Men; and ſuffer no Evil to befal any of us, nor any Plague to come nigh our Dwellings.

AND foraſmuch as we know not whether we ſhall ſee the Light of another Day, be pleaſed, Good God, now to ſeal to every Soul of us the Pardon of all our Sins, through the Blood of the New Teſtament: That when we come to lie down upon our Death-Beds, we may reſt in hope of a Bleſſed Reſurrection.

FINALLY, we laud and magnify thine Holy Name, O Lord, for thy Goodneſs in our Creation, and daily Preſervation: For our Health, Eaſe, Peace, Friends, Food, Raiment, Deliverances, and all the Comforts of this preſent Life: And for all the Means of attaining everlaſting Happineſs; for the Price which our Lord

Jeſus Chriſt has paid for our Redemption; for thy bleſſed Goſpel, thine Holy Ordinances, and all the Motions of thy good Spirit: Humbly imploring thy Grace, that we may ſo live to thy praiſe here on Earth, that we may at laſt be join'd with glorified Saints, and Holy Angels, to Praiſe thy Name for ever. All which we humbly beg for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and Saviour, in whoſe prevailing Name, and comprehenſive Words, we conclude our unworthy Prayers: *Our Father*, &c.

A Prayer for a Perſon at Sea.

O INVISIBLE and Omnipreſent God! the Almighty Creator and abſolute Governor of the whole World! Thou holdeſt the Winds in thy Fiſt, and giveſt Laws to the Sea which it cannot paſs. My whole Dependance is on Thee, from whom cometh my preſent Safety, and my eternal Salvation. I humbly beſeech thee, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt thy Son, that thy Grace and Mercy may be with me all my Days.

I have indeed diſhonoured thy Name, deſpiſed thy Government, and broken thy Laws; I have often indulged my ſinful Luſts and wrathful Paſſions, contrary to my Vows and Covenant made with thee, and thy Word revealed to us.

BUT, O Lord, for Chriſt's ſake, (who is our Paſſover, ſlain for the Salvation of Sinners) be merciful unto me, and pardon my Sins. Let not thy Wrath cut me off in my Pollution, as I have deſerved; but let thy Mercy abound towards me for ever.

AND vouchſafe, O Lord, to keep me by thy Grace, from the Sins to which I am daily expoſed by Temptation, and my own ſinful Heart: And let thy good Providence preſerve me from the Danger wherewith I am encompaſſed.

WE behold, O Lord, thy Wonders in the Deep: Wonders of thy Goodneſs, as well as of thy Wiſdom and Power: O Lord, give me Grace to admire and praiſe thine infinite Perfections; and grant that my Lips may never blaſpheme thy Great and Glorious Name, nor ever curſe Men, who are made after thine Image and Likeneſs.

OUR

OUR times, O Lord, are in thine Hand; how ſoon mighteſt thou make this Sea a common Grave to us all? If but a Plank burſt, or give way, or a Rock, or a Heap of Sand lie in our way, how ſoon ſhall we be ſwallowed up in the Deep, and be wafted into our endleſs and unchangeable Eſtate?

BUT thy good Providence is a ſure Defence: I pray thee, vouchſafe it to me, and to all that ſail with me, in order to our continual Direction and Defence. And vouchſafe to carry us in ſafety to the Place of our Habitation, and to preſerve all our Relations and Friends in their ſeveral Dwellings, that we may behold each others Faces again with Comfort.

AND fit us all for that Place of Reſt and Peace which thou haſt promiſed to thy faithful Servants; and give us thy Grace to make us meet for that eternal Inheritance amongſt thy

thy Saints, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, in whose Holy Name and Words we further pray; *Our Father*, &c.

In a Storm.

O LORD our God! the Father of Mercies, the God of all Power and Might! Who commandest the Winds and the Seas, and they obey thee. We, O Lord, thy dependent Creatures, do send up our Cry unto thee in our Distress. O! let the Voice of our Prayers, and not the Cry of our Sins come before thee: Hear, we pray thee, the Intercession of thy Son for Sinners, and for his sake send us Relief.

THERE is no Power in the whole Creation to help us. Lord, save us or we perish. Manifest, we pray thee, the greatness of thy Power in our

our Succour and Comfort, in the dark and deep Calamity wherewith we are diſtreſſed. The Winds and Waters know their Maker's Voice: and tho they are now in their Rage, yet if thine Almighty Voice ſpeaks the Word, they will ſoon calm and be ſtill. O Lord, be pleas'd to ariſe for our Help, that we may live to ſpeak of thy Mercy, and tell of all thy Wondrous Works.

AND, we pray thee, give us Grace that we may never forget nor abuſe thy Mercy; but incline and enable us to live Holy, Righteous, and Sober Lives, to the Praiſe of thee our God, through Jeſus Chriſt our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen, Amen.*

A Thankſgiving after a Storm.

O LORD! Thou art the God of our Mercies, and the God of our Praiſe. I humbly preſent unto thee, O thou Preſerver of Men! all poſſible Praiſe and Thankfulneſs for thy merciful and ſeaſonable Appearance for us in our late Diſtreſs. We ſaid, we are cut off from the Living, and all our earthly Hopes are wither'd away; but thy good Providence appear'd for us, and the Hand of our God brought us Deliverance from the Jaws of Death. Good Lord, enable us to comply with the end of thy Patience and Bounty towards us, and make thy preſent Mercy to us an inviolable Band of future Obedience to thee, and an Earneſt of thine everlaſting Mercy to us, thrô Jeſus Chriſt our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Thankſgiving when ſafely arriv'd at any Port.

O INFINITELY Great and Good God! by whoſe good Providence I am brought in ſafety to my deſir'd Haven; I humbly aſcribe the whole of my Preſervation and Succeſs to thy Conduct and Bleſſing. It is not in the Power of Man to preſerve himſelf, or to proſper his beſt Endeavours: but it is by thy Goodneſs that we live, and in which we hope. O Lord! give me thy Grace, that as I live by thee, I may live to thee, and may never more diſhonour thy Name, or abuſe thy Mercy; but may live ſuch a Life of Praiſe to thee on Earth, as may be an Introduction to that ſtate of perfect Bliſs and Glory above, where Holy Angels and Saints extol and praiſe thy Glorious Name for ever, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for a Young Perſon.

MOST Glorious and Bleſſed God! The Life of our Life, and the God of our Salvation! I look up unto Thee, the Fountain of Goodneſs, (through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whom thou haſt ordained to be our Mediator) with humble Thankfulneſs for all the Mercies of this preſent Life, and for any Hope of everlaſting Happineſs.

IT is of thy great Goodneſs, that I was born in a Chriſtian Land: and of thine infinite Mercy, that I was early brought into thy Covenant; thy Covenant of Life and Peace, through the Blood of the New Teſtament.

O my God! I deſire to embrace the Engagements, as well as to enjoy the Bleſſings of this thy gracious Covenant;

Covenant; earneſtly imploring thy Grace, that I may live ſutably to my Holy Profeſſion: That ſo I may never, never diſhonour thine Holy Name; nor in any Thought, Word or Deed, deny the Lord that bought me.

SEND thine Holy Spirit, I beſeech thee, into my Soul: Vouchſafe to regenerate and make me born anew of the Holy Ghoſt: Baptize me, O Lord, with that Divine Fire which may at once conſume my ſinful Luſts, and enflame my Soul with Divine Love.

LORD make me to know thee, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent: Prepare my Soul to receive him ſincerely in all his ſaving Offices; and make him effectually to me a Prince and a Saviour, to give me Repentance and Forgiveneſs of Sin. Through Him, O Lord, forgive my natural Corruption, and heal my Leperous Soul: And for

his

his ſake, forgive all my actual Sins; all the Tranſgreſſions of my Youth; my Sins after Vows, contrary to Knowledg, and againſt thine infinite Goodneſs. O Lord! for the ſake of my Crucified Saviour, be merciful to my Unrighteouſneſs, and remember my Iniquity no more.

AND that I may no more commit the ſame, or other Offences; vouchſafe, O Lord, to keep me by thy Grace from every ſinful way, and lead me in the Way everlaſting: Preſerve me from the Pollutions of youthful Luſts; and harden me againſt the Solicitations and evil Examples of impudent and daring Sinners. Be pleaſed to ſhew me the vileneſs of ſenſual Pleaſures, the emptineſs of worldly Poſſeſſions, and the Folly of getting any thing on Earth, by the loſs of thy Favour. Bleſs me, O Lord, with an early Converſion, with an unblameable Life, with a hopeful Death, and a Bleſſed Eternity.

GIVE

GIVE me, Good God, thy Peace which paſſeth Underſtanding; and ſo preſerve me from the Corruptions of this World, that I may inherit the Glory of thine undefiled Kingdom.

AND whereas there are Legions of Infernal Powers, who ſeek to hinder my entrance into that Reſt: O Lord, leave me not to their Malice, nor my own Frailty; but ever ſuccour me with thine eſpecial Grace and peculiar Providence, and make me as ready to help, and to forgive others, as to deſire help and forgiveneſs of thee my God.

MAKE me to lead my Life in thy Fear, and in the ſenſe of thy Favour, and to grow in Grace as I advance in Years; ever mindful of my Creator, my Mortality, and my future Account: That living here to thy Glory, I may for ever praiſe thee in thy glorious Kingdom, through Jeſus Chriſt, who is my Hope; to whom

whom with thee, O Father, and the Eternal Spirit, One God, be all Honour and Glory aſcribed by Angels and Men for evermore. *Amen.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

BY the Procurement of theſe *SOCIETIES*, the following Lectures are conſtantly Preached at *Five* in the *Evening*, on the *Lord's Days* after mentioned, *viz.*

On every firſt Lord's Day in the Month, at St. Laurence Jewry, *St.* Clements Danes, *St.* Michael Woodſtreet, *St.* Olaves Southwark.

On the ſecond Lord's Day in the Month, at St. Brides Fleetſtreet, *St.* Albans Woodſtreet, *St.* Buttolph Aldgate.

On

Advertiſment.

On the third Lord's Day in the Month, at St. Martins in the Fields: *at ſix in the Morning, St.* Giles Cripplegate: *Upon every third Thurſday in the Month, at* Poplar, *at ſix in the Evening.*

On the laſt Lord's Day in the Month, at St. Giles Cripplegate, *St.* Mary Whitechappel, *St.* John Wapping.

Every Lord's Day, at St. Ann's *near* Alderſgate, *at five in the Evening; with publick Catechizing.*

FINIS.

Errat. P. 163. read *Chap. X.* and for *Directions* read *Devotions*; which muſt likewiſe be noted over the following Pages.

POSTSCRIPT.

TO rectify the Miſtake of ſuch as conſider theſe *Religious Societies*, and the Promotion of the *Reformation*, as the Heat of *young Perſons* only, which they think very likely to cool in a little time; I thought fit to ſubjoin: That I do not know any *Religious Society*, in which there are not ſeveral grave and prudent Perſons, of ſolid Judgment, and advanced Years from *Forty* to *Sixty*; which muſt indeed be the conſequence of their having already continued above *twenty* Years. And they go on with great Vigour and Delight in the Ways of God, which they find to be *Paths of Divine Pleaſure*, and the moſt *ſolid Peace*; which attracts many both young and elder Perſons to them; perceiving their ways ſo ſtrictly conform to the *Laws* of God and Men.

And as to the *Gentlemen*, and other *worthy Perſons*, who carry on the principal part of the *Reformation*; they are of *ripe Years* and *Experience*, of conſiderable *Quality* and *Eſtates*, and of the beſt *Character* and *Reputation*. And indeed as the *Honour* of this Affair can never be call'd in queſtion by any *Devout Chriſtian*, ſo can it not at this time be treated with diſreſpect by any *civil Perſon*, ſince the *KING*, the *Biſhops*, and ſome of the moſt *Honourable Perſons* in Church and State, have ſolemnly eſpouſed it, and declared for it.

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